

SERMONS

BY

THE REV. ABRAHAM P. MENDES,

MINISTER OF THE BIRMINGHAM HEBREW CONGREGATION.

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DEDICATION.

THE PULPIT CAN ONLY FAIL TO PRODUCE GOOD RESULTS WHEN IT HAS
TO STRUGGLE AGAINST THE AUTHORITY AND EXAMPLE OF
THOSE THAT ARE IN POWER ;

BUT WHEN IT IS AIDED BY THE CO-OPERATION OF A ZEALOUS AND
WATCHFUL EXECUTIVE, ITS INFLUENCE MAY BE MARKED IN
THE RAPID PROSPERITY OF THE COMMUNITY, TO
WHICH ITS VOICE IS DIRECTED.

IN RECOGNITION, THEREFORE, OF THE ZEAL AND ENERGY DISPLAYED IN
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE

BIRMINGHAM HEBREW CONGREGATION,

BY

JACOB PHILLIPS AND ABRAHAM DANZIGER, ESQUIRES,
THE WARDENS,

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THEM AS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF

THEIR POWERFUL CO-OPERATION IN THE GOOD CAUSE OF
SALUTARY AND LEGITIMATE REFORM,

AND

AS A TRIBUTE OF ESTEEM AND RESPECT FOR THEIR PERSONAL WORTH.

THE AUTHOR.

J. H. Meyer g.
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PREFACE.

THE chief motive which impels a Preacher to publish his Sermons, is the desire of extending the sphere of his usefulness beyond the restricted limits of his general auditory. He hopes to carry abroad some portion of the sacred influence which he has proudly seen exercised by his exhortations over his immediate flock, and to promote that end he is content to appear before the public with a challenge to criticism. I confess to its being *my* secret hope also, that this humble production may find its way to the homes of my people; that its lessons may be heard in the midst of Sabbath holiness and festal celebrations; and that there, it will not fail to excite some improving efforts in the souls of those who read and those who listen. But while I hope thus much, I also wish to deprecate the severity of criticism. I plead, that compositions, prepared for the ears of few and adapted to the necessities of few, should not be rigorously judged, but should be received with that degree of lenity to which such productions are fairly entitled.

In some of the sermons, will be found quotations of Scripture texts, wherein I have departed from the accustomed renderings. In every such instance, I have had some idea to work out, which the version

employed would more clearly illustrate, and therefore have I enlisted it in the display of my subject, content to know that it is in accordance with the grammatical construction of the Holy Language, and that it is based upon the higher authority of one or more of our eminent commentators.

For the rest, the volume will be found to consist of discourses adapted to the various solemnities of our religion, developing the doctrines connected with those sacred occasions and inculcating the duties to which they summon us.

I have appended the Confirmation Service, which I have arranged for the use of my Congregation, and which is intended to enhance the impressive character of the occasion of religious majority (בר מצוה), and to render it imperishable from the memories of the youthful covenanters.

With these few words of preface, "I cast my bread upon the waters" of public opinion, and I shall be but too happy to find it "returning unto me after many days," in the knowledge that it has effected its purpose, by conducing to the spiritual improvement of the homes and hearths of Israel.

A. P. MENDES.

BIRMINGHAM: 119, BATH ROW,
2nd Shebat, 5615.

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I.

ISRAEL'S CAMP AND ISRAEL'S FOES.

A SERMON FOR שבת תשובה.

כי תצא מחנה על אויבך ונשמרת מכל דבר רע:

"When the camp goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every evil thing."—*Deut. xxiii. 9.*

At the period when the great revelation of Sinai selected our race for the mission of enlightenment, a holy war was proclaimed by God Himself, and Israel was then and there constituted His sacred army. By divine command we girded on the sword, unfurled the banner of the Lord, and went forth to fight the battle of religion—to exterminate idolatry, and to root out false worship from the world. But while in arms against impurity, it was especially necessary that the soldiers of God should not be themselves impure, else would the protecting arm of their divine guardian be withdrawn, and instead of victory, the result would be dismay, defeat, and death. Thus, my brethren, the leader of God's armies, ere he resigned his command and bade farewell to his charge, while recapitulating the eternal rules of that service in which they had been enlisted, especially warns the people in the words of our text—**כי תצא מחנה על אויבך ונשמרת מכל דבר רע:** "When the camp goeth

forth against thine enemies, keep thee from every evil thing."

This injunction, my brethren, undoubtedly refers to the physical conflicts which lay before Israel at the time Moses addressed them; and it forms an admonition against the defilation for which the law provides, by reminding them, that even as their success would depend on the Lord's presence in their midst, their camp must be holy, to invite His guardian convoy. But, brethren, we purpose not to deal with the text in its obvious and natural application, because it will thus bear no reference to our present condition. Israel are no longer in arms—their legions traverse not now the arid desert, miraculously sustained—nor cross they raging floods, nor conquer overwhelming hosts—and therefore the injunction set before us is inapplicable; but let us deck it in a moral garb, and we shall presently derive valuable instruction from its words—instruction adapted to the season, and correspondent to the meaning of Holy Writ. To this end we will consider the subject under three heads—

- I. THE CAMP OF ISRAEL.
- II. THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL.
- III. THE PROHIBITED EVIL.

I.

To seek the camp of Israel, my brethren, we must consider the season to which we have arrived. We are embarked on the propitiatory month of Elul. Its dawning hours have overtaken us, and have proclaimed in our ears that same dread warning which

Jonah of old proclaimed in the high places of Nineveh — עֹד אַרְבַּעִים יוֹם וְנִינוּה נִהְפָּכָה: Forty days more and our Nineveh—the Nineveh of pride and violence—will be overthrown. Accordingly, brethren, we have begun the work of penitence. Every man reviews now his conduct and his thoughts—every man be-thinks him of heeding more his religious duties, because we all feel the approach of a struggle involving our best hopes and highest welfare here and hereafter. It behoves us, then, to marshal our warriors, and to be prepared for the conflict. But where *are* we to seek our camp? Where look for that mighty force which is to achieve for us a moral victory? Our legions, my brethren, number three, and you may find them comprised in the teaching of our sages תְּשׁוּבָה וְתַפְלָה וְצִדְקָה מַעֲבִירִין אֶת רוּעַ הַגּוֹרָה “Penitence, prayer, and charity avert the evil of the decree.”

First, then, brethren, in our camp is the phalanx of penitence; and even as in physical warfare, the phalanx, well disposed, must prove unconquerable, so will its force be triumphant in our moral view, provided it be effectually arrayed. For penitence, my brethren, is the resurrection of virtue—a return to life of all that ennobles our nature—a regeneration of thoughts, acts, and hopes. Need I direct you to Holy Writ, that Hezekiah’s life prolonged, or Nineveh’s doom averted, or other scripture facts, shall prove to you the omnipotence of true repentance? No; let your own lives offer both the illustration and the proof—let your own experience remind you of the times when you have prayed for pardon, and

vowed the earnest vow of amendment; how you have felt a sudden glow of spiritual hope within your breasts, which has made you calmer, happier, better men,—giving you, to your perception, a new and holier life. Thus you have all fought already the moral conflict; you have all, on some occasion, encountered the very foes now awaiting your advance, and your hearts will testify that you have conquered. Then commence again the work of reformation that constitutes true penitence. Review every past transgression, repent it and forsake it betimes; for every sin corrected will become a warrior—every sentiment improved will stand forth a champion in your cause, whose firm undaunted bearing will give you the greatest victory man can ever achieve, the victory over self.

Next, my brethren, stands ranged the legion of Prayer, and it is a legion of veteran soldiers. In days far remote it has often fought and conquered. In early times, when pious Abraham heard the doom of Sodom, and to his imagination there appeared already the raining fire and the sulphureous shower, the aid he sought to turn aside destruction was prayer. *He* achieved a conquest, though the degeneracy of the people countervailed the victory. Advance four centuries, and see the Israelites encamped round Horeb. There is evil in the camp, gross idolatry has invaded its precincts; the Eternal has denounced on the people the death they have deserved, the extermination incurred by their infidelity. But Moses is prostrate, and prayer achieves another conquest: it turns away God's wrath and saves the people. Later still, when Israel are at

Hazeroth, and Miriam and Aaron dare, in seditious accents, to raise their voices against Moses, "the anger of the Lord is kindled against them"; and His judgment descending upon Miriam, she becomes a loathsome, plague-stricken leper. Once more Moses supplicates divine compassion, and Prayer overcomes God's wrath. And thus it has been in every age: where human power has been valueless, human agency unavailing, true prayer has had high efficacy in confronting danger and in defeating evil. But of course, my brethren, all supplicatory verbiage is not prayer: the one comes from the lips, the other is born in the heart. Neither is the value of prayer in its quantity. When Moses supplicated, his prayers might be numbered by words. Nor does its efficacy depend on vehemence. The Scripture supplicants used קול רממה דקה, the still small voice; but when *they* prayed, their few humble words of devout orison had *so* much the holy spirit of earnestness in them, that Heaven's judgments were reversed, and Heaven's wrath appeased, by their intercession. Therefore, brethren, I summon you with the invitation of your God. קחו עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה' "Take to yourselves *words*, and turn towards the Eternal." Array your prayers, set in order your supplications; they are your champions, and the day of battle approaches,—the conflict is nigh.

The third wing of your moral army is Charity,—holy, Godlike Charity,—which inherits all its powers from Heaven. צדקה תציל ממות. "Charity delivers from death," is the sage's axiom. Not only to the physical death, which is the end of all flesh, doth the

moralist allude, but also to spiritual death, the dissolution of all the soul's brightest faculties, conscience, thought, and feeling. It is from such a moral death that Charity rescues us, to elevate our nature in closest proximity to the attributes divine, by leading us to deal with all our kind, in the same measure as God deals with us. What is it, my brethren, that corrects all the ills which here beset us, but this great agent Charity? Are misery and woe at our gate, want and distress around our porch? Charity is the source of their relief. Are pain and anguish calling aloud for help, neglected weakness, helpless innocence stalking abroad? Charity hears and sees, and hastens to assist. Source of mutual happiness, it blesses him that gives and him that takes. It ennobles the agent, while it renders the object happy. Since, then, Charity is thus beneficent in its operations for good, it can serve you well in your camp, and, therefore, I bid you summon every word, or thought, or act, which is hallowed by the stamp of Charity, and can take the field in your defence. Hasten to feed the hungry and clothe the naked; carry comfort to the oppressed, joy to the sorrowing. Spread hope in the bosom of despair, happiness in the heart of anguish. Then, brethren, you will be prepared for the great and awful day that is approaching. Your armies, proudly arrayed for moral battle—Penitence, supported by Prayer, and flanked by Charity—will present a force unassailable and invincible, **כי ה' אלהיך מתהלך בקרב**, מחנך להצילך ולתת איבך לפניך, "Because the Eternal, your God, will go in the midst of your camp, to deliver you, and to give your enemies unto you."

II.

Thus far, my brethren, we have reviewed our own forces, in contemplating the camp of Israel; we have now, in the second place, to consider the foes of Israel, against whom our armies are to go forth. In one general term, the enemy is sin—the true moral adversary of all mankind: sin, with its numerous train of baleful consequences and retributing miseries—sin, with its engines of impurity, disease, and death. Lift up your eyes, my brethren, and gaze upon the array of evil that stands opposed to your camp. Let your mental observation rest upon the details of that power which challenges you to conflict. Foremost stands *interest*—a host in itself;—a force that subdues all better emotions, that mocks all piety, and laughs to scorn all virtue. Like an armed Goliath it stands forth reposing on its giant stature, in its herculean strength. “What to me are religion and morality?” is its cry. “I am prosperous and strong—I wax greater and more powerful; and therefore with pride for my buckler, and arrogance for my shield, I bid defiance to your hosts.” Next presses forward *apathy*; and though its careless march and ill-regulated front would seem to augur weakness, yet is the appearance gross deception. There is system in its carelessness—there is danger in its quiet disorder. It will yield no obedience to any rule of upright conduct;—it is indifferent to every claim of virtue—unobservant of all the exalted attributes of religion; but its attacks are all the more deadly. With sure though measured strides it advances, scattering evil before it, leaving death behind it, until overtaking

its prey, it fastens on it with serpent-like tenacity, perilous, most perilous to moral life. And what, my brethren, is that towering troop, that rushes impetuously down upon us. Lofty as the hills, it rears itself above us; violent as the flood, it seeks to overwhelm us. It is *pride*, the fell sin which gives birth to so much of evil offspring—pride, the resolute enemy of salvation and of grace. See it now, how it tramples on humble merit, crushing it to the dust. See it throwing off all control—impatient of dictation—and impetuous as the hurricane, with one only object in view, to rise high as the heaven and to be *alone*—unequalled in its elevation. Can you not recognise the thousand duties of religion, which in its progress it has violated, until now, it towers like some colossal monument, inviting by its height the lightnings of divine displeasure! Next, my brethren, you may behold the legion of *avarice*, scowling at your virtues, and seeking to blast you with its mephitic breath. You can hear the shrieks of widows and the plaints of orphans, whom it has crushed in its advance. You can see the desolation which it has made, that it may increase its store of spoil, and win rich treasure from justice and charity, its most determined foes. Pass on, brethren, and regard that sombre troop behind, whose name is *calumny*. There is a tainted atmosphere around that troop—an atmosphere fatal to moral existence. Around are strewn poisoned reputations—good names stricken with the gangrene of defamation;—honor and truth,—virtue and godliness lie in every direction, perishing from the arrows of detraction, which are

rankling in their wounds—shafts sped from the fatal bow of calumny. No further, brethren, need we pass before the ranks of evil, though besides “interest and pride, avarice and calumny,” there are others arrayed in equally imposing columns. There are troops of envy and jealousy, vile and insidious mercenaries; there are spite and malice, turbulent and merciless marauders; and there are fraud, deceit, and a host of others equal in baneful strength, to struggle with and to prevail against our forces. But we have seen enough, my brethren, to assure us that our foe is formidable—that evil is an ambitious conqueror, whose dominion is already vast and extended, but who pants for further conquest—who hopes to see his hateful army triumphant everywhere—his sovereignty universal. Then, brethren, I summon you with all your strength to take the field. The שופר of preparation has sounded—you have reviewed your own, and reconnoitred the opposing force. Their strength and number, ardour and discipline, seem overwhelming, and your heart is nigh becoming faint—your souls discouraged by the apparent weakness of your moral band of patriot virtues. But, brethren, remember that בשם אלהינו נדגול “it is in the name of our God we unfurl the banner.” Remember לא לגבורים המלחמה that the battle is not to the strong, but that the few have oft prevailed, in cause of right over the mass. Above all, remember, and be fortified by the remembrance, “that thy God goes before thee in the midst of thy camp,” להצילך ולתת אויבך לפניך to deliver thee, and to give thine enemies unto thee.

III.

But, brethren, in the midst of encouragement, we must warn, while fortifying your hearts to encounter the foe without, we must summon you to guard against a foe within, because, although good is powerful against evil, and your camp *can* prevail against the enemy, our text includes a condition of success in the words וּנְשָׁמֶרֶת מִכָּל דָּבָר רָע, take heed against any evil thing. Here, brethren, we must enquire into the necessity for this admonition? How is it necessary to warn us of sin, when we are in arms against it. Surely we could not be expected to make common cause and to form associations with our foes, when we are actually out against them in the field? Assuredly not; the moral bearing of our text would fail, if the prohibited evil were not peculiar; and to determine its import we will enquire of רָשִׁי *in loco*. He thus comments מִכָּל דָּבָר רָע, שֶׁהַשָּׂטָן מְקַטְרֵג, בְּשַׁעַת הַסָּכָנָה “Keep thee from every evil thing, because the adversary impedes us at the time of danger.” This שָׂטָן, my brethren, you are aware is the propensity for evil—the inclination which prompts us to do wrong; and never, says our illustrious commentator, is it so powerful, as in moments of peril. Now, brethren, the unequal contest which we have already contemplated, most assuredly renders the present a period of danger for us. We are approaching the great and awful day, when in these sacred precincts we shall be assembled from evening to evening, engaged in the conflict with sin—striving to overcome it by the combined aid of prayer, fasting, and charity; and on those seasonable exercises there is an attend-

ant evil, to which we are most obnoxious at this crisis—an evil that will make our camp unholy. It is, my brethren, the sin of insincerity—the sin which makes our prayer mere verbiage—our fasting, mere mockery—our charity, mere ostentation—the sin which superstitiously thinks, that any expiation can be efficacious without devout earnestness. *Now*, let us examine the text by the light of what we have elicited, and we will read in it a warning, that when we meet together to ask forgiveness for the past, and vow amendment for the future—when we array our acts of virtue and devotion against the temptation of vice, those acts must stand the test of sincerity—they must be pure-born emanations of godly spirits—not soul-less, lifeless performances. Else will our camp be profane, our protecting God will not abide among us, and our conflict will terminate in our overthrow. For how can God pervade your camp, if there be no holiness within it—if broken promises and unfulfilled vows are hovering around you—if your lips are calling on Him while your souls are alienating Him—if bodily you bend before Him, while spiritually you turn from Him? How can God be with you, when with the garb of humility your hearts are full of pride—when asking mercy from on high, you refuse it to your fellows here below—when seeking peace with God, you are at war with man?

No, brethren, even as of old, success in physical warfare was dependant on physical cleanliness, so at present, success in spiritual conflict is dependant on spiritual purity—sincerity. And if we hope for triumph, we must begin by times the work of puri-

fication. Therefore, let us examine our hearts, and search out every defiling sentiment, so that we may put it away from our camp. First. Let us review our charity. If among its ranks we discover aught of unworthiness—if its power is weakened by display, or its influence affected by unwillingness, or its beauty marred by harshness, let us correct the evil, and let us cultivate the virtue in its pure and holy nature. Secondly. Let us prepare our souls for prayer. It is the greatest privilege mortals enjoy, and its deterioration is unpardonable on every occasion. But at a time like this, when prayer is made subservient to the great and blessed purpose of a return to God—when He deigns specially to summon us to reconciliation by means of worship, it becomes criminal in us to mar its efficacy by the sin of insincerity. Let us, therefore, cultivate devotion from this hour—let us pray with all our souls, call with all our hearts, and every invocation to Heaven will be answered with grace, and peace, and pardon. Lastly, brethren, let us keep insincerity from our repentance—let us bear in mind, that while the treasures of forgiveness are opened to every true penitent, the fierceness of wrath is reserved for the hypocrite. God is ready to support the contrite heart—He is ready to condemn the lip-worshipper. He will answer us before we call, while yet we are supplicating. He will hearken—and accordant to our prayer, He will pity, tranquillize, and pardon. But **והיה מחניך קדוש**, "Thy camp shall be holy," says the text. Here must holiness prevail. Every emotion, every sentiment, every aspiration, must ascend

to Heaven spiritual, hallowed, and pure; and then we may go forth to the conflict, reliant upon the divine support, assured that in the struggle against seducing sin ה' אלהיך מתהלך בקרב מחנך להצילך ולתת אויבך לפניך "the Eternal, our God, goeth in the midst of *our* camp, to deliver us, and give us mastery over our enemies."

PRAAYER.

ALMIGHTY God! great and powerful Guardian of Israel! in olden times, when Thy tabernacle left its resting-place to journey onward to the conquest over idolatry, Thy armies thus invoked Thee: ה' קוּמָה, "Arise, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered: let them who hate Thee, flee from before Thee." Thus, too, O God, do we, Thy children, call upon Thee at this day. Arise, Lord, for Thine enemies prevail against us. Sin and impurity, which deny Thy name, are rulers over our hearts; and we invoke Thy help, that we may subdue their hateful influence, and triumph over their fell temptation. Father, we are weak and powerless; we have, indeed, within us faithful tendencies, but we lack the means to arm them, and to give them that great moral strength which alone can make them prevail. O strengthen us, then, with Thy divine assistance. Help us first to render our camp holy, to receive Thy protecting presence: then, Lord, descend to fill our temple, and to fill our hearts. Descend to fortify virtue and to encourage purity, so that when we encounter our moral foes on Thy great atonement day,

Thou mayst be with us, to give us victory and dominion. לך ה' הגדולה והגבורה והתפארת והנצח וההוד
"For Thine, O Eternal, are greatness and might, glory, victory, and majesty." Thus pray we, Father, on this Thy holy sabbath-day. Hearken to our call, and make us charitable, devout, and penitent, worthy of Thy love, and worthy of Thy favour. Amen.

II.

THE SANCTIFICATION OF GOD.

וְלֹא תַחֲלֹל אֶת שֵׁם קֹדֶשִׁי וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי
ה' מְקַדְּשְׁכֶם

“Ye shall not profane my holy name; but I must be sanctified among the children of Israel: I am the Eternal who sanctifies you.”
—*Lev. xxii. 32.*

IN these words, my brethren, God enjoins upon us a command which forms a compendium of the Israelite's obligations—a command that addresses itself to us in every age and generation, in every circumstance and condition of our chequered existence. These words have as much force for us in our dispersions as they had in the days of our national independence; they speak to our hearts as they spoke of old to our liberated fathers in the desert, without any diminution of their emphasis—without any alteration of their import. Yet, brethren, it is remarkable that no command of our law is more flagrantly mistaken than this. We restrict, in application, its almost illimitable barriers—we cramp its almost unbounded sphere: we never reflect on the vast range of its design and operation—we seize the mere shell, and fancifully imagine that we grasp the kernel, content if we can evade what *we* call as חֲלֹל הַשֵּׁם, a profanation

of God, or promote what *we* distinguish as קדוש ה', a sanctification of God.

Let us, however, examine to-day into its real importance—let us develop the comprehensive nature of the command, in order that we may discover, in all its fulness, what really is the sanctification of God. The text tells us that we must not profane God's name, but, on the contrary, we must hallow Him; and as a motive for the sanctification, directs us to the Eternal, who, hallowing us Himself, reciprocally bids us hallow Him. Now, to establish the signification of the text, we must glance at our position in relation to the Being who thus commands. From the world of nations He has chosen us to be His messengers unto man. From Him we have received the commission by which we are teachers of justice and righteousness, promulgators of truth and faith. To that vocation we have been constant, while enjoying divine favour, or suffering from divine displeasure. Wandering in the deserts of Syria, to expiate our want of faith, we were teaching mankind by our punishment, that God is great and powerful. Reposing under the vine and fig-tree of our beloved land, an obedient, and therefore a happy people, we were proclaiming, by our prosperity, that God is faithful and true. Marching as captives in the triumphant train of Nebuchadnezzar, we were teaching mankind that God is just and holy, acquitting not the guilty. Restored to home and liberty—to country, faith, and temple, while labouring to rebuild Jerusalem, we presented to the world the lesson that God is merciful and good. Finally, scattered over

the earth, in every clime abiding, the object of scorn, or persecution, or, at best, of prejudice, we yet are God's witnesses, the servants whom He has chosen, teaching men God's word and God's will by our mere existence. For even as no other nation has ever yet survived, we have withstood the wreck of ages; we have seen new monarchies rise up, decay, and fall, while we have remained. We have seen great nations conquer, soar upwards in glory, and vanish, while we have remained; because, as we have already said, we are missionaries to declare His name, and publish His law for the spiritual enlightenment of the universe. If, then, brethren, we are ministers of the Most High, our moral demeanour must be consistent with the law which we proclaim—consistent with the doctrines we promulgate. The priests of old were clad, by divine command, in linen robes of spotless white, without a stain to mar their hue of purity, so now, we priests of every age must wear our moral garb of purity in conduct, purity in thought, and purity in words. Every stain thereon is a desecration of our holy office, and a profanation of God's name. Hence it is that we are all ordered to sanctify our Maker, because He sanctifies us. We are in possession of His high commission, and we must support its dignity becomingly. How we shall best do so remains to be discovered; and to that end we will now consider the text, developing as the constituents of a sanctification of God, three several conclusions:

- I. WE SANCTIFY HIM BY VALUING OUR RELIGION.
- II. WE SANCTIFY HIM BY REVERENCING OUR RELIGION.
- III. WE SANCTIFY HIM BY OBSERVING OUR RELIGION.

I.

In the first place, brethren, we are to hallow God by valuing the religion of which He is the author. We have seen that this religion is the commission under which we exercise the vocation of spiritual teachers—the diploma which testifies our fitness for spiritual enlightenment; and, therefore, our uniform conduct must manifest that we set value upon it, and entertain a just sense of its sacred, its ennobling character. Before the world that appreciation of its beauties must be marked. In the sight of all mankind we must feel pride in declaring our lineage, and in practising our sacred calling. But is it thus with us? Are we wont to be influenced by sentiments so sublime? Do we in reality glory in our fate as Jews, — Jews stricken, prejudiced, scorned, but still Jews, by Heaven missioned, by Heaven preserved, by Heaven beloved? Alas! do not your consciences reprove you at these interrogations? Do not a thousand accusations stand forth to your soul's perception, accusations which aim at convicting you of profaning God, instead of sanctifying Him? Do you value your religion, you who mixing with the nations and learning their ways, have also learned to feel ashamed of your persuasion—you who, as you rise in the world's importance, are more and more abandoning your faith—you who begin by concealing, and end by denying that ye are of God's elect—you who revel at forbidden tables, and eat forbidden food, till all men wonder by what link you remain connected with your parent faith? Are you sanctifying your God when, studying not the honour

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of your people and their rites, ye mock at holy things, and indulge in ridicule and scornful jest, while wantonly ye trespass? Are you sanctifying your God, when observant Gentiles, who witness your degeneracy, deduce therefrom the opinion so flattering to our constancy, that enlightened Jews are discarding what they call the superstitions of the Mosaic law? Are you sanctifying your God, I ask, or, rather, do you not profane His name, when your infidelity challenges such depreciation of your faith, and hurls reproach at that, to honour which your fathers gave their lives?

Do you value your religion, you who leave your tribes to go forth among stranger races, to seek a partner of your cares and joys—you who contract unholy alliances in the sight of Heaven, regardless of the baneful consequences to you and to your progeny? Are you sanctifying your God, when your household is barren of the domestic holiness which should pervade the Israelite's habitation—when no religious restraint is therein felt, and neither sabbath joy nor festal gladdening doth ever penetrate its walls? Do you value your religion, you who shamefully neglect your children's moral education—who aiming only at secular improvement, drive your loved ones to pollution for a vain and empty boast? Are you sanctifying your God, when you thus prepare their minds for the pernicious seed which mistaken zeal is watchful and ready to implant therein? Will you sanctify your God by your children's infidelity, scepticism—leading, it may be, to apostasy?

No, indeed, my brethren. All of you, to whom

these charges are applicable (and conscience will be busy at your souls), manifestly set no value on your religion. Its doctrines find no echo in your hearts, its ceremonies diffuse no holy joy in your souls, and, therefore, ye are profaners of God's name, degenerate Jews, faithless ministers. But will ye thus remain, my brethren? Shall you not be anxious to deprecate such guilt, to cast off such reproach? Then awake from your error, and learn to sanctify God as He desires to be sanctified. Awake to learn the value of your religion, to prize it in the future, to cherish its precepts, to love its observances. Make your houses domestic temples dedicated to God, your children domestic ministers consecrated to His service. And to do this well, you must remove your sons and daughters from temptation; and bearing in mind that *ראשית חכמה יראת ה'* "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Eternal," you must teach them religion before classics—the law of God before the lore of infidel Rome and Greece.

II.

But, brethren, besides valuing your religion, as another means of sanctifying God, you must also revere it. You must have for it the profound veneration which springs from the conviction, that it is the link which connects you with your God.

If you refer to the ~~portion just~~ read, you will find ~~that the~~ text which contains the injunction to sanctify God is followed by the enumeration of our ceremonial solemnities, a connection which emphatically teaches, that to hallow the name of the Eternal, it is neces-

sary that you should reverence your religion through its solemn rites. Every ceremonial act must claim your regard—every ritual observance must carry your hearts with it.

You must reverence your religion, and, therefore, your sabbath should summon you to communion with your Maker, away from the cares of secular pursuits. Banished must be the thoughts of labour, the remembrance of your worldly calling. God and your religion claim the sabbath hours; and if you reverence *them*, you *must* recognise the claim. No shift, nor evasion, nor hypocritical quibble, must connect you the most remotely with work. The sabbath speaks with the voice of God; and if you aim at sanctifying Him, you must value it, you must revere it, and you must observe it, because it was God who gave it His blessing and sanctification.

— 2ndly. If you reverence God, your holy days must be revered consonantly. The Passover, with its statute of unleaven and its memorials of freedom; the Pentecost, with its offerings of gratitude and its records of revelation; the Tabernacles, with its ceremonial booths and its symbol of divine protection; the New Year, with its cornet's blast and summon to repentance; the great Atonement Day, with its fast and its tears, and its functions of forgiveness; all, all must be hailed with solemn acclamation—all be invested with glory and sublimity, to manifest your reverence for the religion which gives them birth. Ye must sanctify them all, that through them you may sanctify your God and His law, and become

holy, as befits the children, the servants, and the agents of divine love.

Finally, if you would reverence your religion, you must reverence the temple, which is the sphere of its public operations. **וּמִקְדָּשִׁי תִירָאוּ אֲנִי ה'** "You shall reverence my sanctuary," saith God to Israel; therefore, my brethren, must you tread its courts with awe, and stand before Him with humility and devotion. You must banish the smile of levity, which too often rises to your lips—you must repress the glow of pride, which mounts into your heart—you must shun the irreverent whisper and the sinful converse. Brethren, God sees you all; and in this place He makes His Spirit remind you in the words above, **רַע לִפְנֵי מִי אַתָּה עוֹמֵד** "Know before whom thou standest?" Do you, then, sanctify Him, if instead of showing reverence you exhibit levity—if instead of bowing with humility, you smile and talk, to mar solemnity, and to extinguish the spark of devotion which this place must kindle in the souls of better men? No, brethren, this is in reality a **חִלּוּל הַשֵּׁם**, a profanation of God's name, a reproach upon you as men, and a disgrace as Israelites. I conjure you, then, if you desire to reverence your faith and your Creator, to show it here. Let awe be in your demeanour—let devotion be in your utterance—let humility be in your posture. Then, and not till then, will your conduct in the sanctuary be consistent with the great objects of your worship—the praise, the reverence, and the sanctification of God.

III.

We have now, for our third head, to consider, that in order to sanctify God we must *observe* our religion. Of what use, my friends, would be our simple appreciation, or our unaided reverence of our faith, without an observance of its precepts. Our religion is not intended to be set up before us like the shew-bread, to inculcate holiness, without a necessity for acquiring that holiness. No, brethren, the hallowing power of religion is in its observance—its observance with entire heart, and soul, and might; therefore, we cannot truly sanctify God unless we are good, strict, and observant Israelites. Here, brethren, ye must ask yourselves, if the law is *your* light, the commandment *your* lamp. Do you square your actions with the ordinances of your religion? Alas! no. You cannot deceive yourselves—you cannot hide from criminalising conscience. That rigorous judge, that unerring recorder, *will* whisper to you that you have not sanctified God, because you have disobeyed Him when your interest was at variance with your duty. You have not sanctified God, because, though you knew the right path, and your nature prompted you to walk in it, you suffered cupidity to allure you away from it, and to lead you, with its golden bait, farther and farther from holiness and virtue.

You have not sanctified God when, forgetting the mild and gentle doctrines of your law, you have hated your brother with a bitter hate—have striven to injure him in means, in honour, in reputation—have resented and revenged, when you should have forgiven and forgotten. You have not sanctified

God, when having persecuted the poor and needy, to wring your dues from their very heart-strings, you have been deaf to the plaint for lenity and forbearance—have seen their habitations dismantled without remorse—and have felt no pang for the children, whose cots the law, which urged your claim, had taken.

You have not sanctified God, when you have grudged your tithes to the sanctuary, and have insulted Heaven by the reproaches and evasions with which you have accompanied your offerings to the house of God. You have not sanctified Him, when you have created discord and disunion, sown ill-will and malice, scattered envy and jealousy among your brethren, in the sinful hope that the interests of God's temple might suffer, and its resources be diminished.

In fine, you have not sanctified God, when you have neglected duties, have violated precepts, have transgressed statutes, which are given to you as the guides of your footsteps, and which are accessible to you all in the pages of Holy Writ. But you may sanctify your God, if you will only give to the text its intrinsic importance, and recognise in your relation to God, a reason for holiness. Then arise, my brethren, התקדשו וקדשו את בית ה' אלהי אבותיכם "Sanctify yourselves, and sanctify, too, the house of the Eternal, the God of your fathers." Be concerned for the glory of your people, and be anxious to promote the true קדוש השם by winning universal admiration for your law of truth—and be anxious to evade the real חלול השם of being thought faithless to your God

and to His covenant. Aim at qualifying yourselves for your present destiny of instructing the world in virtue, and for your future destiny of ruling the world with righteousness. Aim at dignifying yourselves through your appreciation of your religion, through your reverence for its doctrines, and through your observance of its commands. Aim at making that religion respected from without by respecting it yourselves—at leading men to God by seeking Him yourselves. Then only will you obey the text, which bids you promote the sanctification of God; for then will you be worthy of the honour which Divinity conferred upon you, when He bade you **קְדוּשִׁים תִּהְיוּ** “Ye shall be holy, because I the Eternal, your God, am holy.” Then, too, will you rise to the moral dignity appointed to you from the day of your selection; and as **מַמְלַכַת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ** “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation,” you will be beloved of Heaven, and will call down the blessings of peace and plenty, happiness and prosperity, which Divine Grace sheds upon the godly.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast sanctified Israel to Thy service, whose sacred will, rehearsed to-day, doth bid us be holy, even as Thou art holy: we pray Thee to shed Thy hallowing spirit o’er us, that we may reach the path of virtue, by Thy divine direction led—by Thy divine example influenced. We supplicate Thee to give us knowledge and discernment, that we may recognise the duty of holiness, to which Thou dost

invite us; and that we may strive with all our energy to practise it in our every thought and act. Help us, Lord, that we may sanctify Thee by our adherence to Thy law—help us, that we may employ sabbath rest, and festal joys, and domestic ceremonials, to hallow Thy name—help us, that we be devout and serious here in Thy temple, so that we may not profane Thy services with sinful levity and unholy conversation. 'Tis thus, Father, we shall become fit for Thy universal ministry—thus that we shall be worthy of Thy favour, worthy of Thy love, and worthy of the distinction to sanctify Thy name throughout the world. Then bless us with Thy blessing of holiness, and make us what Thou enjoinest us, and what we ourselves desire to become—a holy people, with a holy object and a holy destiny. So shall earthly nations acknowledge Thee as heavenly hosts glorify Thee, and so shall all things be prepared for the end Thy wisdom hath designed. Amen.

III.

ISAAC'S WELLS.

וַיַּחֲפְרוּ עַבְדֵי-יִצְחָק בְּנַחַל וַיִּמְצְאוּ-שָׁם בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים : וַיְרִיבוּ
 רַעִי גֵרָר עִסְדָּרְעִי יִצְחָק לֵאמֹר לָנוּ הַמַּיִם וַיִּקְרָא שְׁם-הַבְּאֵר
 עֵשֶׂק כִּי הִתְעַשְׁקוּ עִמּוֹ : וַיַּחֲפְרוּ בְּאֵר אַחֶרֶת וַיְרִיבוּ גַם-עָלֶיהָ
 וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ שְׂמֹנָה : וַיַּעֲתֵק מִשָּׁם וַיַּחֲפֹר בְּאֵר אַחֶרֶת וּלֹא
 רָבוּ עָלֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ רַחֲבוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי עַתָּה הִרְחִיב ה' לָנוּ
 וּפְרִינוּ בְּאֶרֶץ :

"The servants of Isaac dug near the brook, and they found there a well of living water. And the herdsmen of Gerar strove with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying, The water is ours; and he called the name of the well 'Contention,' because they contended with him. And they dug another well, and they strove for that also, and he called its name 'Hindrance'; and he removed thence and dug another well, for which they strove not, and he called its name 'Room'; and he said, Now the Eternal has given us room, and we will be fruitful in the land."—Gen. xxvi. 19—22.

In directing your attention to the text, you will readily imagine that it is not to its literal bearing your regard is invited. The incidents of that strife which, in times far remote, the rude Philistines waged against our father Isaac, are now, as matter of history, instructive to us, only as they are illustrative of the day and the people. But in another sense, this passage of holy writ can unfold to us a source of much useful reflection; it can, under a spiritual veil,

furnish us with a view upon which may be based contemplations of the first importance to us as Israelites. To this end we will treat our text as suggestive of three considerations, and we will develop:—

I. THE BROOK OF GERAR.

II. THE HERDSMEN OF GERAR.

III. THE WELLS OF GERAR.

7 Our text describes the patriarch as travelling through the wilds of the land of the Philistines. Arriving at the brook of Gerar, and probably finding its waters turbid and disagreeable—a result likely to be produced by its progress through the arid desert, where it offered refreshment to every man and beast that should traverse those wilds—his servants begin to re-open the wells which his father Abraham had dug. Let us now view this description as a figure, and its beauty and significance will soon become apparent. The brook is Knowledge, that unceasing stream which traverses and irrigates the path of life—that path which, without its fertilizing spring, would be truly desolate and desert. The brook is Knowledge, that refreshing stream whose waters reach from the distant past, and coursing through the waste of time goes forward to the distant future—spiritual knowledge, whose gleaming waters reflect the wonders of heaven, and cover the wonders of earth. But this
 X brook is not always equally wholesome. There are localities through which it pours a stream of hard and turbid water, which the mental appetite rejects as heavy, nauseous, and disgusting. Yes, brethren, knowledge comes to us, at times, laden with doctrines that are offensive to heaven and unsafe to morality.

Passing through deserts, where infidelity reigns and where the waters of life are not found, the stream of knowledge becomes corrupted in its progress, and acquires a taste baneful to man. Here, then, we have the brook of Gerar, whose sparkling streamlet tantalizes our eyes, but refuses to allay the thirst which preys upon us, the thirst for pure and holy knowledge.

Israel, typified by the servants of Isaac, are travelling through this life, and in the absence of godly teaching, they pass through lands suffering from the thirst of the knowledge of God, to which they must afford relief. They bethink themselves of the early teachings of their illustrious progenitor, **את בארת** **אבי** **המים אשר חפרו בימי אברהם**, "the wells of water which their father Abraham had dug," and they resolve to open them and teach mankind religion. Therefore even on the borders of a brook where a gentle streamlet is rippling, they dig their well, and bring to light **מים חיים** the waters of life, which the world might quaff to their eternal good. And thus, my brethren, through long and weary centuries, these travellers have prosecuted their work to refresh their fellow-men. When impure knowledge dwelt on earth, and over every habitable clime the dark cloud of idolatry hovered, God sent forth missionaries of truth and enlightenment. Patriarchs travelled in inhospitable lands to carry the waters of life, and though they daily courted danger and death, their work was holy work, and onward they went. Priests ministered before God's altar, and for their libations poured out the living waters, that every ceremonial of their

master's service might teach men to be wiser, holier, and better. Elders taught in the assemblies of their people, that their traditions might go down to succeeding generations, and carry the stream of heaven-revealed intelligence. Prophets lived in Israel, and by their holy lives, their warnings and their lessons, the people were still conducted to the fountain of life, that they might drink the eternal draught of pure and holy wisdom. And when all these ceased, a race of pious sages followed, who laboured in the cause of knowledge with a devotion unparalleled in the world's experience. At the edge of the sword they taught,—before the archer's aim they expounded—over the bodies of their massacred Rabbi, the holy work of instruction continued unabated. Driven from one land, their wells of knowledge claimed, like Isaac in Gerar, they betook them to another land, and dug another well. Nothing could repress their zeal—nothing conquer their devotion to the cause of enlightenment. Their father Abraham had erst opened the fountain of wisdom to the world; but ages of intellectual darkness had succeeded, and all the wells which his mission had opened סתמום פלשתים וימלאום עפר “the Philistines had closed up and filled them with earth.” Yes, the earth of worldly doctrine—of grovelling infidelity—had fallen in, and reclaimed the springs which Abraham had exposed, and therefore it became the pride, as it was the vocation of his progeny, to restore the good work. Thus, in the land where idol worship was bowing down millions of God's creatures before the senseless block—when superstition and ignorance lent their hateful force to

degrade humanity beneath the brute, the עבדי יצחק
 "servants of Isaac," descendants of his stock, arose
 to proclaim the teachings of true wisdom—the reve-
 lation of God. In an advanced age, when Greece,
 enlightened Greece, was boasting of her perfection in
 human knowledge, and the ethics of Socrates and
 Plato were brought to bear against the erroneous
 doctrines of the time, that they might convert those
 heathens into moral men, it was the same fountain of
 Abrahamic wisdom which elevated the minds of those
 philosophers to the perception of divine truth. To
 the East went Plato in his travels—to the land of
 Abraham's children did the sage direct his footsteps,
 that he might drink of the living waters at the wells
 the patriarch had dug, and that with its stream he
 might refresh his thirsting compatriots. And even
 now, my brethren, when civilization is on its daily
 march through the world to banish error and to
 eradicate corruption, whence flow the waters of puri-
 fication, but from the same source—the fountain
 opened by Abraham, and deepened at Sinai? But
 you will observe, that if that spring refreshes the
 world by its waters, those waters flow not directly
 through our hands. The civilization of which we
 were the pioneers, has long been led on by others;
 and wherefore? Because, says the text, ויריבו רעי גרר
 עם רעי יצחק "the herdsmen of Gerar did strive with
 the herdsmen of Isaac." Let us then proceed,
 secondly, to enquire into the signification of the
 herdsmen of Gerar, in the development of our
 type.

II.

Those rude oppressors, my brethren, prevented Isaac's settlement in their valley, by disputing the possession of the wells which he had opened, and in our moral view they represent the adversaries of Israel, who have risen in every age to close our schools and extirpate our teachers, that they might claim unjustly our possession. Proceeding to detail, we will pass over the earlier days of our history, which are recorded in holy writ, and pause at the return from Babylon. Then, as you well know, the wells of Abrahamic teaching, which had been closed during the captivity, were re-opened through the zealous labours of Ezra, and his coadjutor Nehemiah, and their waters again made to flow. Thus it continued, the people quaffing themselves, and offering to others the soul-restoring draught, until gradually, under their Macedonian rulers, it began to be corrupted by the stream of infidel philosophy from their neighbours. Then commenced the persecutions of their race and faith. Under the famed Antiochus, their colleges were suppressed, their worship forbidden; and though reactions frequently took place, produced by the victorious arms of their patriots, or by the protecting policy of some new monarch, those gleams of prosperous sunshine were sure to pass over, and be succeeded by new clouds of persecution. At length, our oppressors claiming for their own our land, in which our wells of learning had been sunk, we were forced to yield before their unjust cruelty, and to go forth and seek elsewhere another resting place. In our own eastern home, where the great

rabbinic schools were flourishing, the depositories of our traditions, and where we had again begun to cultivate the neglected study of the law, as soon as its elevating influence began to be felt, by the preservation of our people from the dense mass of heathenism that prevailed around, the oppressions of Adrian began—oppressions which aimed at the extinction of our faith and the dispersion of our schools. He closed our wells, “and filled them up with dust.”

X See now our ~~race~~ in Arabia, where the mass of them were prospering and cultivating the knowledge to which days of peace and happiness invited them; where even a small kingdom of them maintained a shew of independence under what is known as the Homerite dynasty. Up rose the enthusiast Mohamed, with his war of extermination, and the pure water of the springs of wisdom became corrupted by the blood shed in defence of them. Turn we to smiling Italy. There for a time the fostering kindness of the Ostrogothic kings inspired us with hope, and led us to dig wells of living waters; but soon arose the stern decrees of a Justinian, another herdsman of Gerar, to banish us from our adopted home, and send us forward in the world. To sunny Spain we directed our footsteps, and under the Visigoth kings, while the Arian faith obtained, our fathers there dispensed the waters of life. They originated that famous school of learning which, in after years, shed a bright light on that land, and made it so renowned among our people; but soon, alas! the demon of persecution followed us, and incited by the persuasions of Heraclius, that dread alternative of apostasy or death

began to be enforced, which sent the faithful sons of Abraham to seek another place of sojourn. Turn we to France. There, while the country was divided among the descendants of Clovis, Israel at least enjoyed that immunity from persecution which encouraged them to establish the springs of holy knowledge; but what the weakness of the Merovingian princes in that intolerant age neglected, the bigotry of their religious heads effected, until, under Dagobert, the sentence was pronounced which drove them also from that clime. But, brethren, it is unnecessary to dilate further upon this sad theme. Suffice it to say, that for nearly twenty centuries we have found no rest, but have been driven by one monarch from his realms—spurned by another—massacred by a third—anon recalled, and seduced into a moment of calm and repose, to be again expelled with greater cruelty and barbarity. These, then, are the herdsmen of Gerar, whose violence and injustice have everywhere robbed us of our peace, appropriated our possessions, and driven us with curses from our claims. All that we could do—the few against the mass—the weak against the powerful, was to emulate the example of Isaac, and yielding peaceably our rights assailed, betake us to another field and dig another well. We did so; and with the tear of sorrow in our eye, but a ray of faith in our heart, we have since wandered to and fro, finding, like Noah's dove, no rest for the sole of our feet. But, brethren, we have seen in the text, that when Isaac relinquished his wells, he perpetuated the history of his wrongs, by the names he bestowed on the despoiled possessions. With the same object,

let us, in the third place, review our adverses, and we shall discover the applicability of those very names to our circumstances.

III.

The first well which our fathers dug is, as we have before observed, the well of sacred knowledge—of revealed religion, which had been originally opened by Abraham on his divine mission from his home in Mesopotamia to the perils and inhospitalities of the land of Canaan. Fearlessly and devotedly the patriarch went forth to convert the world of idolaters, and wherever he could find a spot whereon to pitch his tent, 'וּבֵן שֵׁם מוֹבֵחַ וַיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם ה' "there he built an altar and proclaimed the name of the Eternal."

To his labours, succeeded the Egyptian bondage, during which the well of living waters was filled up by the accumulating dust of centuries of persecution. At last, that period of gloom came to an end, and from Horeb there gushed forth the never-failing spring, which has since watered the whole universe. Compare, now, my brethren, the religious state of the world at this day, with its abject condition in the time of Abraham. Then, the patriarch stood alone in the world of unbelievers: now, the vast majority of earth's inhabitants, look up in worship to the God of heaven. And how, my brethren, has this great end been produced? By the agency, by the active agency of Israel—by the spring of living waters, which we have dispensed to all mankind. Long were we the only teachers of religion, because it was our peculiar mission to bring all nations unto God; and it is our

glory that we were faithful to our vocation. But at length, a new religion arose, based upon our ancient faith, but connected with dogmata that were opposed to the spirit of that fountain of truth. Here, too, were the herdsmen of Gerar; they claimed our well, and interpreted scripture to accord with their views. לנו המים "The waters are ours," was their cry. They contended with us for our birthright; they averred that we had lost our vocation,—that because our forefathers had sinned, we were to be hurled from our high appointment as promulgators of divine truth,—while *they* pretended to hold divine authority to supersede us; and though their doctrine was strange to Israel and Israel's laws, they demanded that we should resign to them our sacred commission and drink of their defiled spring. We refused to drink of their bitter waters, but we lacked the strength to resist their violent and unjust claims. Like our father in the text, we retired from the well, and, like him, we called it עשק "contention," כי התעשקו עמו "because they contended with us." Since then our adversaries have possessed our well; and though they have impaired the healthy sweetness of its waters, they yet benevolently give drink to every thirsty soul, so that gradually before them the errors of idolatry are vanishing, and the world is being prepared for that great, that final return to the religion of Sinai, which is to herald in the day of Israel's restoration.

The second well dug by our race is the well of secular knowledge—the fountain whence the stream of arts and sciences, the sweet, refreshing draught of

literature, all spring forth. From us evidently sprang not only the science of theology, but also the arts of poesy and music, of oratory and historiography. Aided by the peculiar beauty of our language, and the extraordinary incidents of our history, it is not to be wondered that our poets occupy the high position which archæologists assign to them. Suffice it to say, that the effusions of our muse are admitted "to surpass infinitely in grandeur, sublimity, beauty, and pathos, all the most celebrated productions which Greece and Rome gave to later times."* Next to poetry is music; and it is not too much to assume for Israel, that it attained to considerable eminence among them, since every page of our annals records the cultivation of this art divine, as well in the temple as in the tent, in worship as in festivity. Proceeding to science, we find, at very early dates, the existence of arithmetic and mathematics, astronomy in a very advanced state, architecture well and artistically understood; and coming down through the monarchy to the time of Solomon, we are joined by universal testimony in the belief, that in the days of this, the wisest of men, the springs of knowledge were plenteously dispensed to the world. At length our national troubles supervened; and during the captivity in which we long abode, it is evident that we mixed with our conquerors, and thus extended and diffused those sciences which had been preserved among us. But gradually those wars and dispersions succeeded, which were fatal to the arts of peace; and here, too, the wells of knowledge, which our ancestors

* Horne on the Scriptures.

had opened, סתמים פלשתים וימלאום עפר "the Philistines closed up and filled with dirt." When, however, later times overtook us, and arts and sciences were progressing around us, wherever we could find a home, we directed our energies to the development of the mind. Under the Moors in Spain, we attained to considerable eminence in arts, and filled the world with the renown of our schools of medicine and philosophy, astronomy and physics. Under the Catholic rulers, who succeeded that dynasty, we rose still higher in scholastic and scientific excellence; and Toledo enjoyed a world-wide celebrity for the Jewish theologians, astronomers, mathematicians, and physicians which it produced. In Portugal, learning also flourished among us, and there we introduced the printing press and sent forth works in every department of learning. Driven thence, we found a refuge in Italy, where we soon gave evidence of our love of literature by our successes in history, medicine, and jurisprudence. In Holland, too, we cultivated learning, and brought forth illustrious men, who adorned our academies, and have left behind them great reputations for erudition; while in Poland, under the protecting arm of Duke Boleslas, we advanced as rapidly in arts as in commerce, and founded colleges, celebrated for rabbinic lore, which possessed the confidence and admiration of the entire nation. But although it might be thought, that potentates would rejoice in the allegiance of subjects whose genius had elevated the character of their respective countries, such was not the case. Our scholastic successes soon sowed the seed of jealousy, and every

ruler, in his turn, demanded either the apostasy or the banishment of the Jew, while the state profited by the fruit of our exertions — by the reputation which we had gained for the country. But at last, when those modern herdsmen of Gerar discovered, that driven from one home we went to find another, only to ennoble it by our literary and scientific genius, they brought their persecution to a climax, by the shameful restrictions which they imposed upon Jewish talent. Envious of genius, which they possessed not, and which they could not bend to their tyrant wills, they made the walk of science and the field of literature forbidden ground for the Jew, and condemned him to the narrow path of traffic. Again, what could we do, but imitate the act of Isaac? We abandoned our well; but ere we yielded it we called it שטנה, “hindrance,” for hindrance, base and odious, is the fettering of men’s minds and the cramping of the intellectual energies.

But, brethren, praised be Heaven, whose providence has extended a milder spirit throughout earth, now that we have begun to dig our third well, there is none to dispute possession, and we are in the enjoyment of the waters which flow from רחבות, “room;” כי עתה הרחיב ה' לנו ופרינו בארץ “For now the Eternal has enlarged us, and we can be fruitful in the land.” In almost every country the fetters have been removed; and in this favoured land we can attain — aye, and are attaining — to intellectual distinction, so that we may again give waters to the world. In every department of science and art we are making rapid strides, and we can again furnish society

with proficient in those professions on which our fathers shed lustre in former times. And wherefore? Because, instead of restricting genius, the wish now obtains to develop it—because every lover of science and art is welcomed among the learned, without regard to creed or doctrine—because the cause of intellectual development is here aided in common, by all classes and persuasions. Of this truth, your community offers an interesting illustration, in the erection of one of your institutions. Your humble well of learning, your National School, was brought into being, cheered on and aided by the cordial co-operation of those who in olden times were your adversaries. Here you had no עשק, or iniquitous contention—no שטנה, or malevolent hindrance; and, as a consequence, your institution sprang into a glorious and vigorous existence. But what there were no Philistines to do, you have done yourselves. The well, which on its opening poured forth plenteously מים חיים “the waters of life,” you have stopped, and are still stopping, with your pride and prejudice. You are impeding its healthy action, and are filling it with dirt, the dust of neglect and indifference. Yes, brethren, your institution totters, because, suicidally, you are hurling it down—because you give not to it the support of your influence—because you have no shame at presenting the strange anomaly, of having asked Gentile aid to build your well, and then of sending your children to drink at Gentile cisterns, בארות נשברים אשר לא יכלו המים “broken cisterns, that will not contain water.” Say, what regard can you have for Israel’s glory, when you help to sully it

yourselves? What care have you for the honour of your people, when you degrade it in the sight of the nations? Arouse you, then, betimes, my brethren; the opportunity now offers; I pray you seize it with avidity. Direct all your efforts to make your well yield pure, sweet, and wholesome waters, and then, bring your young ones to drink thereof. In other words, banish all individual considerations, and improve your institution, elevate its scope—extend its sphere till it reach efficiency. Correct all arrangements that now clog it, remove every obstacle that mars its progress, and then, send your young ones to it for culture. Thus will you bring into effect the great design which filled the minds of its founders, and your children will be ready to go forth in the army of Jewish talent, to contribute their quota to the intellectual advancement of the world. Thus, too, will you discharge your share of duty to the age, in manifesting the blessings that spring from tolerance; and when your institution occupies the high position of being a well of living waters to your people, you all will gratefully bless your guardian God, **כִּי עָתָה הִרְחִיבָה לָנוּ וּפְרִינוּ בָאָרֶץ** “because He has given us room, and we have increased in the land.”

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY FATHER! Thou who art **מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים** “the Fountain of the waters of life,” we beseech Thee to prosper our path on earth, even as Thou didst prosper that of our father Abraham. Him, Lord, Thou didst send to the heathen who knew Thee not, to carry the waters of salvation, that they might

drink and live for ever; and us, too, his progeny, didst Thou at Sinai dignify with the same exalted mission,—the mission which is to bring all men to Thee. Father! for three thousand years Thy servants have ministered before Thee; and although our wells of wisdom have been often claimed by our opposing Philistines—though “*contention*” pretended to deprive us of our legation, and “*hindrance*” interposed to check our progress—yet, Lord, we have uniformly striven to emulate our father’s faithfulness, building everywhere an altar, and proclaiming Thy blessed and holy name. And here, Lord, where Thou hast given room to Thy servants, they have dug a well of living waters,—a spring whence these children of Thy people may quaff the draught of life. But that well, O Lord, is failing fast, its sources are near drying up, from the sinful apathy and neglect of those who should most preserve its stream. Therefore, O God, we invoke Thy blessing on the work. We pray Thee to inspire the hearts of all with that zeal for their vocation, which will impel them to use their most earnest efforts for the restoration of its glory. We pray Thee to instil into their minds the firm conviction, that they cannot honour Thee more than when they sustain an institution, whose object is the instruction of Thy law, the promulgation of Thy name, and the diffusion of that universal knowledge of which Thou art the Source. Thus, O God, will Thy blessing be upon us; and for the honour and distinction to which we shall attain, we will ever chaunt the praises of that beneficent hand, “that hath now given us room, and made us fruitful in the land.” Amen.

IV.

JACOB'S VISION.

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעֵר שָׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חֲרָנָה : וַיִּפְּנֶה בִּמְקוֹם וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם
כִּי־בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשְׁם מֵרָאשָׁתָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב
בִּמְקוֹם הַהוּא : וַיַּחֲלֶם וְהִנֵּה מַלְאָכִים מִצֵּב אֶרֶצָה וּרְאִישׁוֹ מִגִּי'י
הַשָּׁמַיִמָה וְהִנֵּה מֵלָאכִי אֱלֹהִים עֲלֵים וִירְדִים בּוֹ :

“ Jacob departed from Beersheba, and went towards Haran. And he lighted upon the place, and lodged there, because the sun was setting; and he took of the stones of the place, and put for his pillow, and he lay down in that place. And he dreamt, and behold a ladder placed on the earth, and its top reaching to heaven: and behold angels of God were ascending and descending by it.”—*Gen. xxviii. 10, 11, 12.*

A WANDERER from home and kindred is placed before us in the text. Jacob, our father, has obtained the patriarchal blessing destined by Isaac for his brother, and that brother's anger is kindled against him. The hostility of Esau's heart, which has remained dormant until now, is roused by this last wrong; and his slumbering passions lashed into fury, he vows deliberately and emphatically, that as soon as his father's mourning shall terminate, he will wreak a fearful vengeance on his brother—a vengeance to be sated only in his death. This resolve is communicated to Rebecca; and her maternal breast, full of dismal ap-

prehensions, dreads that in a moment some ebullition of Esau's fierce resentment might deprive her of her darling son, and she, therefore, bids him flee to Haran, "until his brother's anger be turned away."

Accordingly, forth goes the wanderer, away from home, and away from the sweet associations of his childhood. Separated from all he has ever loved, he must henceforth look to the blank waste before him to find new friends,—to create new affections,—to form new associations in the land of strangers. He leaves his father, rapidly verging towards the grave,—expecting momentarily the summons of death, and he dares not hope to be beside his pillow, and to receive the last, the death-bed benediction. He leaves his mother, full of grief and anguish at this cruel but unavoidable separation, at a time when her fondest hopes for him have just been realised, and yet he knows not whether they shall ever meet again on earth. It is thus, friendless and disconsolate, his soul oppressed with grief, unaccompanied by worldly goods or treasure, "with his staff only in his hand," he goes forth on his lonely way, supported solely by his faith in that God, whose blessing and protection have been invoked upon him by the prophetic voice of Isaac. He takes his cheerless journey through the wilderness, unrepining, uncomplaining, regret in his heart but confidence in his soul, until the shadows of evening lengthen around him, and the setting sun finds him in that solitude far from the dwelling of man. But he has lighted upon a spot hallowed once by the virtue of his progenitor—a spot to be reconsecrated on that night by his fervent vow,—to be hal-

lowed yet again by his descendants in the distant future. Brethren, Jacob is at Moriah, where the turf is his bed, the spangled heaven his canopy, while the surrounding stones furnish a pillow for his head. Thus he slumbers; and while his wearied frame reposes in sleep, there breaks upon him a vision of heavenly import, with all the indications of a supernal, awe-inspiring visitation. This vision, my friends—meant at once to warn and to support him, to admonish him of the errors which had superinduced his present condition, and to speak sweet comfort to his sorrowing heart, by lifting it up to the great Source of Goodness—was directed to him in his threefold capacity—

I. THE TRANSGRESSOR.

II. THE FUGITIVE.

III. THE HEIR TO ABRAHAM'S BLESSINGS.

I.

My brethren! To palliate the early errors of Jacob, if not entirely to exonerate him, has been the almost uniform labour of our commentators; but in order to render the patriarch thus inculpable, the plain and obvious meaning of Scripture *must* be tortured and perverted in no small degree. Let us, then, rather deal with the patriarch's character as it is drawn by Holy Writ, with all its lights and shadows, with all its beauties and defects, and we shall find that Jacob's position in the text was undoubtedly a visitation of Providence for those very misdeeds which disfigure his early life. רב יעבר צער "That the elder should

serve the younger," was the announcement made by Omniscience to Rebecca, before those brothers had seen the light; and, doubtlessly, in His own good time, and with His own high agency, the Eternal would have effectuated the design which was to make Jacob the inheritor of the blessings and the destiny predicted through Abraham. But, brethren, it is evident that both Jacob and his mother, as if distrusting the efficacy of God's unaided agency, were bent on anticipating the execution of His will by the frail means of their own human powers. Hence it is, that when his weary brother lay before him, so enervated by fatigue and hunger that he deemed death impending, we see Jacob sordidly making terms for that morsel which was to give him renewed life and vigour, and demanding as those terms the transfer of his primogenital rights and honours. Hence, too, it is, that we see him conspiring with his mother to impose upon his aged father, adopting every measure to make the imposture more successful, expressing not the slightest hesitation, because of his abhorrence of that duplicity, but looking only at the chances of detection and its consequences. No, brethren, let us not believe that Jacob acted nobly in these incidents of his early life. Let us cling to the belief that his motives were laudable - that he really feared to see the patriarchal power descend into his brother's unhallowed hands—that he longed, piously longed, for his father's dying blessing;—but let us also believe, that influenced by those motives, Jacob sinned against his father and sinned against his God. And let us recognise in the fiat which sent him forth,

and in the privations of a solitary journey through the desert, the retributive judgment of that God "who acquits not the guilty." Therefore came this vision to his slumbering senses: a ladder, symbolising the divine judicature, **מצב ארצה** "its base resting upon earth," where error and impurity abound, **וראשו מגיע השמימה** "and its top reaching to the heaven," where Omniscience abides. Above it, presides the Eternal God of mercy and judgment; and while the angels go upward, to carry the record of every act committed here below, downward, also, come the messengers from heaven, bearing recompense to the virtuous, punishment to the guilty, and grace to the penitent. This instructive vision, which wrapt the senses of the slumbering Jacob, was sent to remind him that the justice of Heaven sleeps not,—that the rights of primogeniture, which he had coveted and purchased at the expence of his brother's sufferings, were now profitless to him, a fugitive from his home,—that the distinctive blessings, which he had nefariously obtained, was the origin of the distress and privation to which he was now subjected; but that his errors thus punished and atoned for, he was henceforth entitled to the tender mercy, the fostering care, and unfailing goodness of his father's God. Henceforward, too, he may travel on his lonely way, assured that the early promise would yet be performed through his progeny, who should become, under divine direction, the glorious possessors of the land whereon he lay—the numberless inhabitants of that waste, so blank, so cheerless, and so desert now.

II.

The second object of the vision was to comfort Jacob in his condition of a fugitive.

Whether the fortunes of nations or of individuals engage our view, we shall equally perceive ample evidence of an agency by which those fortunes are influenced. God has created a system of matter, and that system must be directed. There are vast planets revolving around us, each one a sphere peopled with God's creatures, all dependant for life and support upon His unfailing hand. Would He leave them to their own resources, and have no care for their preservation, no heed for their subsistence, no interest in their welfare? Or, rather, must He not, as the Creator of humanity, give us food to eat and raiment to clothe us,—visit with favour our obedience,—punish with judgment our rebellion? Most assuredly, my brethren, reason pronounces her verdict, and thus proclaims the truth of a Providence. But apart from this, let us take experience for our guide, and pass through the annals of *our* world, and therein we will trace this truth, stamped upon its every page. We will read of powerful nations arising from obscurity, reaching a meridian fame, and then, when the design of Providence has been accomplished through them, they have vanished, with the fate of all human associations, decay and ruin. Where now are mystic Egypt, mighty Babylon, classic Greece, princely Tyre, heroic Carthage, colossal and imperial Rome? Overthrown by the power that erected them, they live now only on the page of history, or are celebrated in the poet's lay. And if we turn to the lives

of individuals, we as intelligibly recognise the directing providence of God. Which of you, my brethren, is here who cannot look back to his past life, and therein trace some one occurrence which he has been forced to deem providential? Where is he who can fail to recall some incident which has spoken to his heart, with full distinctness, the declaration **אֶצְבֵּעַ אֱלֹהִים הוּא** "this is the finger of Omnipotence"? You have, ere now, my brethren, seen your devices hastening towards success; every difficulty overcome, you at last approach the goal of your expectation, when lo! some unforeseen event interposes, and at once your plan is marred. Or you may have been overwhelmed with sorrow and distress; your heart faint with doubt, you may have lost all hope of succour, and calmly have been awaiting the hard fate which ye have deemed inevitable, when, behold! a light has broken in upon you, a hand has been outstretched to uphold you, and your sorrow has been turned to joy, your grief to happiness. Such, my brethren, are the incidents which prove incontestably the cheering truth of all religion, that there is a Providence. And it is this truth, my brethren, that Jacob's vision is also intended to inculcate. The Eternal, we have seen, has punished him—he is bearing the visitation with a proper spirit; and true to His compact with Abraham, God seeks to assure the alien of His high protection, and thus dispel the gloom in which his fortunes are enshrouded.

The sleeper, therefore, beholds the ladder, now emblematical of the divine guardianship, whose base rests upon the wants, the frailties, and the cares of

earth; but its top reaching to heaven, whence those wants are supplied, where those frailties are considered, and those cares relieved. Upwards go the angels from earth to heaven, representing all the hopes, the prayers, the aspirations which man sends up the ladder; and downwards come the sustenance, the comfort, the aid, or the support which he invokes, from the beneficent God who stands above the ladder. This vision, thus applied to Jacob's present condition, is to take a comprehensive view of his destitution, desolation, and distress, and to assure him, that although now forced to flee with precipitancy from his father's house, thither God's providence will reconduct him yet, with honour and glory;—although he lies now without aught of worldly good, abundant shall be the wealth, and vast the possessions which God's providence will yet confer upon him. Finally, although his lonely journey is physically surrounded by perils and privations, God's providence will yet protect him through them all, so that when he shall tread the homeward path, he shall be a father among his children, a husband near his wives, and a lord to the princely retinue which will accompany him to his father's house.

III.

But, my brethren, the vision was not confined to the individual fortunes of Jacob. It took a wider scope, and embraced not only his own welfare, but also the welfare of the world. Among the glorious promises of which Jacob had become the heir, *the* most glorious was *והתברכו בורעך כל גוי הארץ* "and

all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves through thy seed." Word for word, letter for letter, was this promise renewed unto Isaac, and now ויעמדהו ליעקב לחק לישראל ברית עולם "God ratifies it unto Jacob for a statute—to Israel, for an eternal covenant." Brethren! If Jacob could ever doubt the effectuation of this promise, that doubt would be the last thought in his mind on this eventful night. How he, whose personal condition is here so forlorn, shall ever become the transmitter of such a blessing to the world, is a probability that can only be retained by a faith the most firm and devoted. It is, therefore, perhaps, that that faith is strengthened, and his courage sustained by this heavenly vision; for not only is the promise confirmed to him, but God condescends to shew him, symbolically, the manner in which that promise is to be fulfilled. Once more we see the ladder: it represents now the testimony of truth, the unerring standard of right and wrong—the law of God. This time, its resting upon earth represents the hearts, the minds, and the souls of mankind. וראשו מגיע השמימה "Its top reaches unto heaven," whence are to come its holy precepts, its sublime doctrines, its comforting influence. וה' נצב עליו God, its author, presides above it; and His voice calls forth to us, that the angels of obedience, love, fear, and devotion should from us ascend before His throne, whence He, too, sends us down His angels,—bright bearers of His blessings, His love, and His beneficence. And this law, which is thus to be the means of communion between earth and heaven—the creature and the Creator—man and God, He com-

mands Jacob and his progeny for ever, to go forth in the world, and to teach, to promulge, to diffuse among every nation and every tribe, so that through them all mankind may be blessed with the heavenly blessings—light, peace, and truth.

Here, my brethren, terminates the vision, and Jacob awakes from his slumber; and feeling within him the sacred influence of that awful interview, he remains powerfully impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and with the hallowed character of the place, which has been the scene of such a manifestation. He arises, devotes a portion of his slender stock to the consecration of the place, and acknowledges the consoling mercies of the night by a pious act of reverent worship. He registers a solemn vow; and with his heart lightened of its care, his bosom fraught with sweet emotions, he resumes his journey, no longer dark and perilous to him; for now he feels that over and around him hover heaven's ministering angels, to lead him on his way, and to shield him from harm.

And now let us briefly apply to our own instruction and improvement, the lessons which our text has elicited, and we shall find, that they speak to us with a holy voice—a voice which utters not the accents of denunciation, but those of comfort, peace, and joy. Brethren! God communicates with earth: there is a ladder reaching up to heaven; and, therefore, let us strive ever that the records of our acts, which God's ministers take upwards, shall speak of works of piety, of charity, and love. Let good deeds ascend before us, to await our translation thither, so that in *this* life and

hereafter we may never fear to meet the angels which God sends down to us, because they will bring us the treasures of approving heaven in recompense for our acts.

Secondly. God rules the world: His Providence is a ladder from heaven, which reaches down to earth, and regards the meanest worm that crawls upon its surface. Thither, then, direct we our hopes and our prayers. If misfortune overtake us, if sorrow oppress us, care involve us, let our cry ascend to Him from the depths of our souls; and if His blessings reach us, and there is happiness in our heart, joy in our homes, upward, too, let our effusion of gratitude ascend, and the angels of His grace will be missioned to us, to dispel our sorrow, or to enhance our joy—to remove our care, or to confirm our felicity. So shall the holy communion between us and our Father be improved, to His pleasure and to our merit—to His honour and to our eternal advantage.

Lastly. My brethren, since mankind are to be instructed by us, and to be blessed through our agency, let us strive to become worthy of the embassy, and to discharge efficiently its ennobling functions. Let us not hold out the dead letter of the law, with the view of leading men to God, but let us combine with our teachings that irresistible moral lever, example. While we preach the doctrines of God's law, let us ourselves cling with devotion to those doctrines—while we overturn the images of idolatry that pollute the heathen world, let us cast down our own idols—while we uproot the superstitions of strange worship, let us free ourselves from those creations of ignorance

—while we day after day exclaim מה טוב חלקינו “how goodly is our portion,” מה נעים גורלנו “how pleasant is our lot,” מה יפה ירושתנו “how beautiful our inheritance,” let us, by our acts, demonstrate to the world that we are happy in that portion, that we are proud of that destiny, and that we cherish as the apple of our eye, that inestimable heritage of the congregation of Jacob, תורת משה whose holy doctrines are to diffuse life and peace among all mankind, and to realise the glorious prediction of the seer, כי תמלא הארץ לדעת את כבוד ה' כמים יכסו על ים “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God’s glory, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. ii. 14).

PRAYER.

GREAT God of Israel! In the dark hour of the night Thou didst reveal Thy wondrous providence to our slumbering ancestor, teaching us, through him, to repose confidently on Thy care, and to approach Thee with all our wants and all our cries for succour. And to give force to this announcement, Thou didst represent to him the hallowed house, which in future ages his children should erect to Thee, on the site whereon he then reposed—depicting, by a type sublime and beautiful, that temple, which, with its base on Mount Moriah, should be a ladder whose top might reach to Thine own high abode, and be the medium by which our praises and our prayers should ascend to Thee, as messengers from our souls—by which, too, Thy countless blessings should descend to us, the messengers of Thy peace and favours. Lord, teach us to

cultivate the holy privilege of communion with Thee, which this vision doth so powerfully inculcate; and when we address Thee from this place, the type of Thy great temple, grant that we may ever feel the sacred awe which Jacob felt in the presence of his God. Lord! **אין זה כי אם בית אלהים** "This is no other than the house of God," and, therefore, let us only see Thy glory when we stand within its hallowed walls; **וזה שער השמים** and as "this is the gate of heaven," so let our prayers find entrance to Thy throne, and be by Thee, accepted and regarded. And let us, O Eternal, be assured of Thy protection, so that we may go on fearlessly to *our* journey's end, seeing ever around us the angels of Thy goodness and Thy blessing, "until we return in peace unto our father's house," and live for ever near Thy throne. Amen.

V.

AMALEK.

A SERMON FOR שבת זכור.

זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים :
 אשר קרך בדרך ויזנב בך כל הנחשלים אחריך ואתה עיף
 ויגע ולא ירא אלהים :

“Remember what Amalek did to thee on the way, when ye were going forth from Egypt. How he met thee by the way, and smote thy rear, all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary ; and he feared not God.”—*Deut. xxv. 17, 18.*

THESE words, my brethren, bear reference to an early episode in our history—to an important incident which occurred at the very beginning of our national career. Israel had departed from Egypt, and under the guidance of the Eternal, were being conducted by a circuitous passage to the promised land, in order that they might not be disheartened by the aspect of war and tumult, which a direct journey would render inevitable. Yet, when they were enervated by fatigue, worn out with toilsome journeying, and but little expectant of hostility, the armies of the insidious Amalek burst suddenly upon them, attacked them in their most unguarded quarter, and smote them in the rear, where the feeble and helpless were located. These

ruthless foes assailed not our hosts while they were flushed with triumph over Pharaoh and his legions—while the war-song was resounding in that desert air. No; they waited until fatigue had done its work—until privations had prostrated the strength and energies of Israel, then—wily and heartless, insidious and cruel—they burst forth upon the undisciplined, unoffending band, resolved with one well-directed blow to annihilate the race that had hurled the giant Pharaoh from his throne, and shaken mighty Egypt to its centre.

But, brethren, with this event, as a subject of history, we purpose not to deal. We entertain it to-day, only as it may be suggestive of other truths connected with the season, and illustrative of our text. We desire not to confine ourselves to the Amalek of fact, but would direct our view to the hostility of another, a moral foe, whose warfare forms a parallel in every respect with that described in our text—whose enmity has wrought our misery and woe throughout successive ages, and is as fierce and relentless now, as it was of old at Rephidim.

Let us, then, proceed to enquire—

- I. WHAT IS THE MORAL AMALEK?
- II. WHEN ARE WE MOST OBNOXIOUS TO HIS HOSTILITY?
- III. HOW MAY WE REPEL HIS ONSLAUGHT?

I.

Brethren, What is the moral Amalek?

Unclasp your annals, open wide the records of the past, that we may arraign this hereditary foe. He is one, the most constant, deadly, and unforgiving that the

world ever beheld. Beginning from Egypt, even to this day, he has unchangingly waged a deadly war with our people—has sown death and pestilence, sin and misery among us. Look up into the starry expanse, and there you will be reminded of him,—gaze around you upon earth and recognise him—aye, in the very depths of the ocean ye will perceive his hateful presence. Know ye now, my brethren, what this Amalek is? It is the spirit of *imitation*—the spirit which has led us to rob heaven of its orbs, earth of its treasures, the deep of its monsters, to defile withal a holy faith, and insult the majesty of a holy God. This spirit, my brethren, ye may assert with truth, is common to all flesh. The contagion of example, whether for good or for bad, is everywhere an agent of formidable force and power. And while the seed of good, from the careful tending which it requires, yields rarely its fragrant blossoms and its goodly fruit, the germ of evil, once scattered on the soil, flourishes, and soon attains a fatal luxuriance, when, like the eastern upas, it sends forth its poison on the wind, and taints the atmosphere with death. Yes, brethren, the spirit of imitation is in every age, among every race, and in all conditions; but, alas! for us it has been our constant, our hereditary curse. From the dawn of our national existence to the present hour,—through all the vicissitudes of our fortunes, that Amalek of imitation has been among us and around us, to poison our moral life. It was that which assailed you בדרך בואתכם ממצרים “on the way when ye came out of Egypt”—which sent sin among you while God was in your heart. Your

souls then were full of gratitude and love to Him, your spirits were elevated by faith and veneration; and pondering over the day at Horeb, you still beheld in your imagination, the supernal radiance of God's descent upon the mount—still murmured the words of full obedience, *כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה* "All that God has said we will do," when the moral Amalek beset you first, and led you to sin against that guardian God by his seducing exhortation, *אלה אלהיך ישראל אשר העלוך מארץ מצרים* "These are thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt."

Thus spake the spirit of imitation through the mouths of the *ערב רב* "the mixed multitude," who had followed your hosts, converted by fear and *not* by faith—thus spake it to the remnant of Egyptian idolatry, which lurked yet within your bosoms; and conquered by its hateful voice, you fell, and sinned and suffered. Anon, you were conducted to the land of promise; and with all the elements of national happiness and prosperity, ye lived securely. Your religion was the sacred revelation of your God—your government was His benign theocracy—your polity, the unerring precepts of His ordination. Once more came Amalek among you: seduced by imitation, ye desired a king—you *would* throw off the honourable yoke of God's peculiar dominion, and ye asked for men to rule you. Through their agency, again ye fell; your kings, in their turn, allured by imitation, upraised grim idols like surrounding nations, dishonoured God by vice and impurity, and allied themselves with image-serving races, until the wrath divine would no more be restrained, and your sovereignty

was overturned—your tribes were borne into captivity. Thence ye were once more ransomed by the faithfulness of Abraham's God. In *His* love for you He stirred up the heart of Cyrus to restore you to your homes and altars, and again ye went forth from captivity to rebuild Jerusalem. For years ye laboured in the holy work, until it reached completion; and under the salutary guidance of the zealous Ezra and the watchful Nehemiah, ye progressed in peace and prosperous happiness. Those pious watchmen warned you, with a loud impressive voice, against the Amalek of imitation. They conjured you with all their energy to avoid admixture with the nations, that ye might remain beyond the fatal reach of their contagious vices and idolatries; but, in process of time, your enemy began again to assail you. Persia sent her false faith, Greece sent her philosophy; and the spirit of imitation applying both, gave Israel infidelity and epicureanism, to steep her children in idolatry, and make them false again to their God and ancient faith.

To expiate those crimes we are now once more aliens from our home; and we might reasonably hope, that now, when our fortunes are adverse, and we have lost land and altar, the implacable foe would be appeased, and the remnant of our people would be safe from his aggressions. Not so, my brethren. Let us glance abroad at our people at this day—let us mark the religious laxity which unhappily prevails in every clime, and we *must* admit that the Amalek of imitation is still as malignant in his enmity—as deadly in his hostility. It is his work we behold, when we gaze

upon Israel's religion, degraded in their homes, their families, and their temples. It is his work we contemplate, when those domestic ceremonies, so dear to the hearts of our people, are condemned, neglected, ridiculed as meaningless observances. It is his work we contemplate, when we hear of ancient ordinances overturned, to keep pace with an age of progress. It is his work we contemplate, when we read of Sunday Sabbaths among Jews, of circumcision abrogated, unlawful food allowed, Messianic prophecies repudiated, and a whole host of such outrageous innovations, marring the beauty and sublimity of our faith, and making Israel a bye-word among the heathen. That this is the case among us at this day, you, who know the history of the reform movement in Germany, Belgium, and America, can well attest. Can such, my brethren, be considered a component part of Israel, denying as they do, by word and deed, great master-doctrines of our faith? Must we not virtually look upon them as הנחשלים אחריך "the weak ones in our rear," cut off by the wily Amalek, sacrificed to the hateful spirit of imitation ולא ירא אלהים "that has no fear for God"? Brethren, if we wish to preserve our hosts intact, to keep the foe far from our ranks, that we may journey forward to the eternal land of promise, and reach its borders in security, we must obey the injunction of God, and use every effort, improve every occasion, תמחה את זכר עמלק "to blot out the memory of Amalek." We must correct in ourselves every baneful tendency, and heed the precept ולא תהיה אחרי רבים לרעות "not to follow the mass to evil." While we hasten after

the good, we must eschew the bad example;—we must trust in the saving power of God, and defy the insidious foe. But, brethren, ere we give this bold defiance, we should intimately know the tactics of our adversary;—we must seek out our unguarded quarter, and there concentrate our strength. Let us, therefore, in the second place, enquire—

II.

When are we most obnoxious to the attacks of Amalek?

The answer, my friends, is in the text, **וַאֲתַה עֵיף וְיָגַע** “When we are faint and weary.” The foe, so deadly and malignant, is also insidious and wily. He has never assailed us when we have been prepared for him—he has never come forth boldly to encounter our hosts, while they were flushed with victory and elate with conscious strength! No: he has invariably betaken himself to our rear, where the helpless and innocent are collected—has surprised us in the hour of our moral exhaustion, when we have been careless and apathetic. Thus it was, that when Israel having entered the Promised Land, were hot in the extermination of their idolatrous neighbours;—while with holy zeal and devoted heroism they fought the battles of the Lord, they remained unassailed by the malignant spirit. When the contest was over, and they were reposing in peace and tranquillity, they became an easy prey to its seductive influence, and they were vanquished. Again: while Ezra and his coadjutor lived and preached, and every eye was open with vigilance—

every hand ready in preparation, because the foe was near;—when in later times, zealous patriots and God-fearing leaders were in the field against heathenism and its oppressions, Amalek appeared not,—he had vanished for a time. But no sooner had the Scribe departed from the pulpit—the Maccabee from the field, than his hateful influence was felt again. In the present captivity, my brethren, for a long time we heard not of him, because pressed and persecuted as we were on every side, we were *forced* to be vigilant, and that watchfulness disarmed him ever. Other and more open foes attacked us. The sword was unsheathed, and the stake was kindled, but both failed. Men sought our physical death, and we were ready for martyrdom: they demanded our moral death, but they could never prevail against our devoted zeal. Here, then, there was no opportunity for Amalek. But at last the conflict ceased; and now that persecution is over, and intolerance is fleeing from the earth, Israel is once more עֵיף וְיָגַע “faint and weary,” and our enemy is watchful. He is at every weak position, spreading death in our rear—dismay throughout the camp. Yes, my brethren, a great advantage does Amalek reap from the spirit of tolerance which is prevailing everywhere. Mixing unreservedly with other nations, we are prepared to imitate them. We contract with them unholy alliances—we feast with them on unholy viands—we accompany them to unholy places. Reliant upon our strength, we unhappily feel no fear—our faith we deem too firmly grounded—our self-restraint too immoveable, to apprehend assault. It

is then, my brethren, that the wily foe attacks us. One by one he assails our sentiments and convinces our doubts:—we begin by concealing our faith—we end by denying it, and give to Amalek a complete and easy triumph. But you will ask, how avert these evil consequences—how turn aside a result that seems inevitable, since the pursuer is unflagging and the pursued feeble? Shall we, you inquire, in this enlightened age, neglect the sweet reciprocities of social life—avoid communion with our fellow-man, because he is of another faith? Surely not, my brethren; cultivate a friendly intercourse with your Gentile brethren—tread hand-in-hand with them the noble paths of science, art and literature—join them in their charities—mix with them in the social walk through life, but be ever vigilant of yourselves—be more so of your young ones. Watch over *them* with an anxious solicitude, and teach them how to think and act, that they may pass unscathed through the dangers of imitation. Do not depreciate those perils, for they are great and imminent, but assured of their existence and solicitous to avert them, follow me to discover the means of doing so, by propounding the third interrogation—

III.

How may we repel the attacks of Amalek?

For the answer, brethren, we must revert to the history of the conflict at Rephidim, to which our text refers, and there we shall read these remarkable words, rich in instruction—comprehensive in import.

וְהָיָה כִּאֲשֶׁר יֵרִים מֹשֶׁה יְדוֹ וְגִבֹּר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכֹאֲשֶׁר יֵנִיחַ יְדוֹ וְגִבֹּר

עמלק "And it came to pass, that when Moses lifted up his hand, Israel prevailed, but when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." Sublime doctrine this, my brethren, pregnant with salutary meaning! While our hands are outstretched to heaven—our hearts directed thither—our hopes there based, the foe is powerless against us. It is only when we are engrossed by the wants of earth, its joys and its pleasures, that oblivious of God, we offer ready access to hostility. If in the moments of our national peace and calm—when warfare had ceased, and Israel sat under their vines and fig-trees, prosperous and happy—if then, my brethren, we had uplifted our hands to God, and grateful for His bounties, hallowed by His love, we had confided to Him our destinies, Amalek had never known a victory. And thus, if now we would so regulate our lives as to keep our hands spread out towards heaven, directing thither all our worshipping emotions, and reserving none for earth and its enjoyments, we might go on our way rejoicing, and hurl defiance at our adversary. But it is our curse, as it was our fathers'—as it is that of all mankind, that the world allures us ever, and steals away our hearts from God. The joys and pleasures that surround us here, are present, visible, experienced; and we clutch at them eagerly, heedless of what we sacrifice to gain them. The blisses and delights that are reserved on high, are distant, invisible, and as yet untasted; we have no endurance to await their concession, we content ourselves with the more attainable, the more seductive, but more unholy joys. These we pursue with such avidity,

that every higher duty is neglected—every nobler enterprise rejected for their sake; we are heedless—unwatchful—our hands are wholly fallen to earth וגבר עמלק “and Amalek prevails.” But, brethren, how can we change the fortune of the conflict—how restore the mastery to Israel and discomfit the foe? Our hands are heavy, they cling to earth with all tenacity; how shall we sever the links that bind them downwards? Our hands are weary, and have no strength to extend themselves on high; how shall we keep them there directed to invoke God’s aid and support? Once more: look at Moses and mark his conduct וידי משה כבדים ויקחו אבן וישימו תחתיו וישב עליה ואהרן וחור תמכו בידיו מזה אחר ומזה אחר ויהי “And the hands of Moses were heavy, and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on the one side and the other on the other side, and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.” You too, my brethren, have a stone whereon to rest yourselves and recruit your departed vigour, שני לוחות אבנים those everlasting tablets, which lost to us though they be, have left their sacred impress graven on our hearts. On this stone—the imperishable rock of ages—the law of the immutable, repose ye, and summon *your* Aaron and *your* Hur to uphold your hands, and keep them towards heaven. The priestly Aaron symbolizes purity—the heroic Hur represents zeal; then let both these support you מזה אחר “on the one hand,” purity, to hallow your thoughts and hopes, while it keeps you upright; מזה אחר “and on the other hand,”

zeal, to animate your soul with courage and heroism, devotion and truth. Thus aided, my brethren, you must conquer in the glorious struggle: thus aided, your hand will upwards remain, worshipping heaven, and imploring his help **עַד בֹּא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ** "until the sun goes down," and your day of life closed in, you homewards go to your God, to reap those blessings which await you—the blessings of which your ancient foe has so oft tried to despoil you.

And now, my brethren, let us review the lessons that have passed before us, and take to heart their useful, truthful teachings, so that they may admonish us in our danger, and encourage us in our labour.

We have seen that Amalek is among us and around us, with his seductive wiles, to cut off our hopes and destroy our virtues—to alienate our souls from God. Let this recognition arouse us to vigilance and activity; and as we have unmasked his tactics and discovered the secret of his success, let us be guarded against his inroads. It is the weakest position he assails; there let us place zealous watchmen—stalwart energetic sentiments, to repel aggression. It is in our rear he is found, where the weak ones, our women and children are collected; let us, then, place around them a stronger defence—a bulwark of faith and devotion, godliness and truth.

Scripture records of Amalek **לֹא יִרָא אֱלֹהִים** "that he fears not God": his faith is different from yours—his example prejudicial to your moral life; then **הִשְׁמַר לָךְ פֶּן יִפְתָּה לְבַבְּךָ** "take heed to yourselves lest your heart be deceived," and ye be led to betray

your allegiance to God. Remember, that though in the very midst of the conflict—while the battle rages, and your good resolves are most powerfully assailed, there is yet a way to conquer, for **כֹּאֲשֶׁר יָרִים מֹשֶׁה יָדוֹ** “when Moses lifted up his hand Israel prevailed.” Would ye seek an example? Turn to the history which the approaching festival will soon bring before you. Behold the pious Mordecai, in the very atmosphere of imitation, opposing both the physical and the moral Amalek. The whole court was obedient before the imperious Haman: the kingly favour of Ahasuerus, made all obsequious to his will, and every one fell prostrate in the dust before his honoured presence. Mordecai alone refused. He was a faithful subject, his loyalty had been well proven, for, without fee or reward, his agency had saved his monarch’s life. But when he was required to bend the knee and almost worship earthly greatness, he held his hands on high towards heaven, refused to give to man the homage only due to God, and fearlessly devoted himself to a struggle with a powerful, implacable, and revengeful foe. You know the issue, my friends; Israel prevailed and Amalek was discomfited. In the like manner, whatever temptations may allure you, whatever ills beset your path, whatever fears assail you, keep your hands upraised to heaven in recognition of His power to save, and His mercy to uphold. Stand firmly on your invulnerable rock of faith **תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה**. Let holy purity and pious zeal support you and **לֹא תֵאֱנָה אֵלַי דְּרֵעָה וְנָגַע לֹא יִקְרַב** “evil shall not come near to you and the infection of bad example shall not approach your tents.”

כי מלאכיו יצוה לך לשמרך בכל דרךך for He will charge His angels with you, to preserve you in the journey through this life." על שחל ופתן תדרך תרמם " Upon the foe, who is fierce as a lion and wily as the adder, ye shall tread, ye shall trample upon the watchful whelp, and upon the insidious, venomous serpent."

כי בי חשך ואפלטהו אשגברו כי-ידע שמי : You will have clung to your God and He will exalt you : He will ennoble you because ye have vindicated His honour. יקראני ואענהו עמו אנכי בצרה אהלצו ואכבדהו He will be with you in the hour of trouble and the day of trial, to deliver you and make you glorious. And when this life is over, and heavenward ye speed, to return unto your parent spirit, to His world of eternal bliss He will welcome you : ארך ימים אשביעה : He will satisfy you with length of days, and will show you His salvation.

PRAYER.

Lord, God of Israel, ever kind Father of Thy people, who hast so often displayed Thy mercy to Thy children, who lookest down from Thy realms of greatness, and givest firm support to all who lift their hands to Thee. Have compassion upon the smallest of nations, and display again to us, Thy saving power and Thy wondrous might. Even as Thou didst redeem us from the iron furnace of Egypt—even as Thou didst vanquish Pharaoh and Amalek before us—even as Thou didst open the gates of Babylon, and bring our captives forth free men—and

even, as at this season, Thou didst compassionate Thy children and rescue them from the hands of Haman, so, gracious Lord, be with Thy Israel of this day, to protect us from harm—to aid us in our distress. Keep our hands steadfastly upheld to Thee—our hopes firmly based on Thee; and from Thy fountain of grace and love, let us drink plenteously of the goods, the blessings, and the joys which flow from Thee. And in Thy faithfulness, O Lord, restore the aliens to their possessions and let the sweet savour of Thy sacrifices ascend to heaven from the altars of that house, wherein once more Thou wilt set Thy glory.

May the anointed speedily come to Zion, and may our eyes behold him, and our hearts be gladdened by the sound of that שופר גדול “the great trumpet” which is to publish redemption to Israel. Amen.

VI.

THE PERPETUAL LIGHT.

ק"ק שער השמים AT THE SYNAGOGUE OF THE
SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE JEWS, BEVIS MARKS,
LONDON.

ואתה תצוה את בני ישראל ויקחו אליך שמן זית זך כחית
למאור להעלות נר תמיד: באהל מועד מחוץ לפרכת אשר
על העדת יערך אתו אהרן ובניו מערב עד בקר לפני ה'
חקת עולם לדורותם מאת בני ישראל:

"Thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they take unto thee, oil of olive, pure, beaten for the lamp, to offer up the perpetual light. In the tabernacle of the congregation outside of the veil that is over the testimony, shall Aaron and his sons arrange it from evening till morning before the Eternal; it is for the children of Israel an everlasting statute to their generations.—*Exodus*, xxvii. 20, 21.

THESE words introduce us to the first ceremonial of the temple service; and though that service and its solemnities have been long since suspended through our dispersion from our land and our sanctuary, still this ordinance is enjoined with remarkable emphasis as being unceasing—"a statute to all eternity." Let us, therefore, seek the meaning of this precept, which, though the scene of its performance, no more exists,

can yet be obligatory upon us in all its force and importance. This end we shall attain by enlisting the aid of those luminaries who lived and taught in olden times—whose teachings are treasured in our minds and cherished in our hearts. Bringing the Medrash Raba to bear upon this passage, we find ויקחו אליך שמן זית וך לא שאני צריך להם אלא שתאירו לי כשם שהארת לי כד לי להעלות אתכם בפני כל האומות שהם יהיו אומרים ישראל מאירים למי שמאיר לכל:

That they take to thee pure olive oil, etc., not because I have need thereof, but that you may give light to me, even as I give light to you, in order that ye may elevate yourselves in the sight of all the nations, and that they may say, "Israel gives light to Him who Himself gives light to all." It is from these kindred words, my brethren, we have to seek the explanation of our text; and to this end we will put three questions.

- I. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE LIGHT?
- II. WHERE IS IT TO BE KINDLED?
- III. WHO SHALL KINDLE IT?

I.

What is this light, my brethren? It has a relation to Almighty God: it is to represent His majesty, His power and His mercy. Whenever the idea of divinity is to be conveyed to human understanding, Holy Writ shews us, it is best done by light. God establishes a covenant with Abraham, and as His glory descends to ratify the compact, הנה תנור עשן ולפיד אש "behold a smoking furnace and a torch of fire" proclaim His august presence. He appears to

Moses at Midian, to accredit him for his mission to liberate His people, and where He appears, והנה הסנה בוער באש "behold the bush is burning with fire." He leads forth the people from the bondage of the Pharaohs, and on that eventful night which sees a nation ransomed by their God, a luminous pillar soars above them, the abiding-place of divinity. He summons the people to receive the doctrines of light and truth, and as they kneel around the mount and hear the thrilling accents of the *Shofar*, ירד עליו ה' באש, "the Eternal descends upon the mount in the fire." Now that a sanctuary is to be erected for His worship, that the souls of his people may be purified by communion with Him, his first command ordains, that a continual light shall burn therein. And truly, brethren, light has high claims to this distinction—to be set up before our mortal perceptions as a constant type of God. *Light illumines*:—before it, darkness vanishes and clouds disperse; gloom dares not abide in its presence, and as its glory rises, the mists depart to leave a radiant brightness in their place. *Light vivifies*:—it sheds a quickening influence over earth's productions,—imparts life to dormant principles,—gives new vigor to failing energies, and is the fruitful source of a world of sustenance to our dependant race. *Light warms*: it has the power to banish every chill,—to impart a genial glow where inclement cold prevails, and there spread comfort and joy. *Light is majestic*: it possesses a magnificence, enjoyed by no other object of creation,—a brilliance whose beauty and majesty exalt it to represent supernal glory. Thus, my brethren, light irradiates and

quickens — cheers and comforts—is beautiful and unique, good and universal; and therefore it is a fit emblem of that high power, who, merely willing, יְהי אור, “let light be,” called into being the nucleus of the thousand blessings, which diverge from that one created good. But, brethren, let us ask why God commanded in the text, that a light should be kindled to symbolise His presence, when He had already promised to descend and fill the sanctuary, and to leave His presence there. Between the Cherubim, upon the mercy-seat, within the most Holy place, He had already declared to Moses וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לְךָ שָׁם וְדַבַּרְתִּי אִתְּךָ “I will meet thee there and speak to thee.” This condescending grace, my brethren, relates to the light shed by God upon man. Behind the veil, the Shechina rested, to dispense mercy and goodness, protection and blessing, upon his chosen ones; but the light of our text, which was kindled מִחוּץ לַפֶּרֶכֶת “outside the veil” was the light לְהַעֲלוֹת “to be offered up” by man to God—a soaring upwards towards His Divine intelligence,—an elevation of our faculties to Him,—a cultivation of that great moral lever — knowledge. Yes, my brethren, the light of our text is the lamp of knowledge, which, typifying God, is placed without the veil,—in that part of the tabernacle that belongs to man, as an injunction that he has, in his spirit, a portion of divinity, and that *that* must be nurtured, directed and developed, to the attainment of knowledge in its highest degree,—of wisdom in its most glorious results. We are to kindle the light of knowledge, that we may recognise and value our Heavenly descent,—that we may cultivate those vir-

tues which are to give us happiness in eternity. We are to kindle the light of knowledge, that, as a nation, we may be wise and discerning, prosperous and happy,—that we may do honour to our selection by the will of God, and that our devotion to His service may win for us the testimony of all nations **ישראל** **מאירים למי שמאיר לכל** “Israel offers light unto the God, who enlightens all.” And this exalted knowledge, my brethren, our text commands, must proceed from a pure and undefiled source. Free from any admixture—secure from all adulteration, it must be **ך** pure in its elements, to represent a holy motive, the promotion of the honour, the glory, and the sanctification of God. And equally important it is, that such knowledge should be cultivated, without tumult or discord, but with all the constituents of love and prosperity. The oil must be **שמן זית** the produce of the olive, that universal emblem of peace and luxuriance, which, offered up in all its purity, marks the promotion of a knowledge, lawful in its barriers, sacred in its object, ennobling in its pursuit, and sublime in its nature;—a knowledge realising to the full, the glorious end for which Moses hoped, when he presaged as the testimony of the world **רק עם חכם ונבון הגו' הגדול הזה**, “only this great people, is a wise and understanding nation.” It is, therefore, my brethren, that although the temple is desolated and the altars are razed, the ordinance of our text has still significance for Israel—is still an active principle among their children. God has said that it must be “a statute to all eternity,” and the duty must, therefore, never cease: day after day the holy light must be kindled,

tended and supplied, so that it never goes out. Knowledge must be diffused with no sparing hand and no flagging energy, but, if we would yield obedience to the divine behest, an active zeal, an earnest industry, a faithful watching and a pious usefulness must be presented in our tabernacle, so that we may help to keep alive the high eulogium presented in the Medrash, **ישראל מאירים למי שמאיר לכל** "Israel gives light to Him, who gives light to all."

II.

Where is the light to be kindled ?

באהל מועד "In the tabernacle of the congregation," says the text. In the houses where spiritual worship must combine with spiritual instruction. And what place so suited to the kindling of that sacred light ? What place so suited for the adaptation of its rays to the perception of all classes and conditions ?

To the sanctuary comes he who thirsts for spiritual knowledge,—for the light of God's law, that it may illuminate his spirit and teach him how to live,—that it may direct him to Heaven, and lead him to communion with his God. To the sanctuary, come the unfortunate, bowed down with grief, to pray for grace and aid, reliant upon the light of God, that it will cheer his bosom. To the sanctuary, comes the sinner, awakened to a sense of his guilt: impelled by conscience he comes, to ask for pardon—to shed the tear of penitence and vow the vow of amendment. He, too, hopes to feel the influence of the holy light, that he may hence depart with his soul encouraged by its rays. Hither, also comes the weak

and erring child of clay, in search of a light that will keep the alluring sin from enslaving and oppressing him, by presenting holy things unto his tempted eyes. It is to the sanctuary, that the pious child of fortune comes, to pour out a grateful heart and offer praise for countless blessings; and he, too, expects that God's light will elevate his soul and make him yet more thankful. To the sanctuary, too, comes the old man, that he may be warmed and cheered by the holy light, so that as life fades gradually from his aged senses, his mind may be elevated to the contemplation of עולם שכלו טוב "the world that is all good." And hither, comes the youthful spirit with the offerings of his first pure emotions, to vow allegiance to the God of his creation, and to learn those rules of heavenly origin, whereby his loyalty must be regulated. He hopes, too, that God's holy light will vivify each rising thought, and bless it in its purity. If such attendants do hither come to seek the light, should not the lamp be kept illumined, that they may be cheered by its brightness, comforted by its glow, animated by its emblems? Then, wherefore, brethren, is the light so frequently extinguished in the tabernacle—wherefore is spiritual knowledge so lightly estimated, that its dispensation is accounted a work of inutility? When the second temple possessed not the presence, divine, Israel bewailed it as a calamity—a calamity that truly presaged their speedy return to the abominations for which their fathers had suffered. And in the like manner, while the lamp of knowledge is not fed with the pure and peaceful teachings of religion, we must regard it as an evil:—an evil con-

sequent upon our degeneracy,—an evil pregnant with baneful effects. Let us, then, be admonished, my brethren, that while light is *here*, our people cannot grope in darkness—our children depart to seek it in other places and at other hands. But if the lamp be once put out and gloom pervade the sanctuary, they will be driven from it; and to satisfy their craving after the light, they will search for it and find it where the lamp is not purely kindled, where it is fed with a defiled oil, and arranged by unhallowed hands. But, brethren, taking the sanctuary to represent its sacred Archetype, we will suppose it to be the Most Holy, “behind the veil” where God’s presence abides, where God’s ark rests, where God’s law is treasured,—where then shall we seek for that *מחיצת הפרכת* “outside the curtain,” where the lamp is to be kindled? Surely it is in the school, where the foundation is laid, in preparation for that noble superstructure, which must be here perfected! Surely in the school, where secular knowledge goes hand in hand with her sacred sister, and while the one directs our sons through earth, the other leads them towards Heaven. Surely it is in the school, where the immortal spirit is cultivated and the priest is sanctified for admission behind the veil! Yes, brethren, the school is no less a sanctuary than the synagogue, and the lamp must be as faithfully tended in the one, as in the other. Remember, therefore, that your vocation is to educate—to kindle the light of wisdom—to teach the erring and the unlettered—the ignorant and the worldly. Remember that your destination is to burn light before the fountain of light,—to diffuse knowledge

from the very footstool of the Eternal, כרי להעלות, אתכם בפני כל האמות “that ye may elevate yourselves in the sight of all the nations.” Preserve then, my brethren, your sacred institutions as the apple of your eye: strengthen the pillars of your synagogue with faithfulness and union—set in order the perpetual light before your God, and let it be maintained with all the elements of peace and brotherhood, and tended so unremittingly that its radiance be never extinguished. And your schools too, my brethren, those moral nurseries of the temple, sustain and improve with all your energies. You must extend their sphere—elevate their scope—and enlarge their action; and the result will be, that your generation will, in its turn, send forth its missionaries of light to perpetuate the lamp of God, obedient to the ordinance which is חקת עולם לדרתם מאת בני ישראל “an eternal statute to the posterity of the children of Israel.”

III.

Brethren, who is to kindle the light?

Since the lamp is knowledge—the synagogue and school, the place,—who is to officiate? Our text responds, יערוך אתו אהרן ובניו “Aaron and his sons shall arrange it.” But even as the light has its symbol, and the sanctuary its type, so have the priests their representative. With the suspension of the temple services, all the details of the sacerdotal office have ceased, ואין לנו כהן בעבודתו and we have no more priests with sacred duty clad. Their directing influence has devolved upon those who minister in the synagogue as the servants of God, and are the mes-

sengers of the congregation to the throne of grace—those who are the expounders to Israel of the doctrines of their faith. It is therefore, to such that the Divine command now has relation—to those who stand to minister and teach, לשמור את דרך עץ החיים “to keep the way of the tree of life.” Now, brethren, in few words, the text records the duties that devolve upon these guardians of the sanctuary. It bids them bring to their ministry an untiring zeal, an unflinching industry. מערב עד בוקר “From evening to morning” they must tend the sacred lamp, renewing with assiduous care the olive oil of peace and truth—the pure unadulterated knowledge of a pure religion. They are to be no untrained teachers, but as the oil was למאור prepared expressly for the service—so must they be reared for their duties and sanctified by that rearing. Here, brethren, let us review this highly favoured country, where civilisation exists—where tolerance abides—and where our people have found a happy home for more than two centuries. Surely the lamp should be kindled in all our sanctuaries through the realm? Surely every temple should have its priest who can arrange the light and tend it, as by law enjoined? Alas, my brethren, נקוה לאור והנה חשך “we wait for light and behold darkness.” With all the inclination to light up their tabernacles, many, very many remain unilluminated—while many have seen their lights expire, because they had no priest. It were invidious to dwell upon this theme, or we might, to our national reproach exhibit how often an unfitted guardian, a polluted oil, a want of careful tending, has led to these results; but

we will gladly quit the past and strive to forget it, in the glorious prospects dawning in the future.

My brethren, in this most holy place, and under sanction of the God who pervades it, I introduce to you the design of the venerated chief of your sister "Kehiloth"; the design which is to furnish you with those sacred essentials, which are to keep the lampalight in your sanctuaries. The Jewish College, projected with so much wisdom and good intent, came forth to the country as a great and glorious boon, pregnant with countless blessings for our people. Unhappily, brethren, apathy and supineness, the blight of every noble project, assailed this enterprise, and threatened to annihilate it. Was it too much to expect that Israel would demand from her chiefs and elders, an adequate support for this her sacred cause? Was it too much to expect, that they who are favoured by heaven's permission with rank and influence, would cheerfully enlist their interest in the service of their race? Was it too much to expect, that those whom God has blessed with wealth should open their treasures, and freely yield their tithes towards the sanctuary, by qualifying its ministers and purifying its courts. Surely not, my brethren; these are the claims of our religion—they are our tribute to God, and our nationality. Yet all these expectations have been disappointed; for the cause progresses not as it deserves, but halts even now betwixt life and death. Let it not be thought, my brethren, that those in "the high places of the nation" have not contributed to the enterprise: they have done so; but, except in a few honourable instances, the glow

of shame kindles within us when we reflect to what a restricted extent. However, brethren, let who will neglect the call of God, be you obedient to His ordinance—be you responsive to the claims of people, duty and honour, and God will bless—conscience will approve. For you, this sacred enterprise should have peculiar importance, because your position in this land is a peculiar one. When two centuries ago your fathers sought and gained re-admission to these realms, they solemnly established a covenant of peace, whereby they engaged for themselves and their posterity, that Israel should ever deserve the protection of this great country, by their fidelity as citizens, and by their loyalty as subjects. Therefore, apart from your vocation as Israelites, your reverence for the memory of those ancestors, and the fealty you owe to their compact, demand that ye should go forward on the honourable path of intellectual progress—that you should use every effort to make the Jews of England glorious throughout the world, fulfilling in another sense the words of the Medrash, **לכל ישראל מאירים למי שמאיר לכל** by making Israel enlighten the land which enlightens all the world. Let me then urge you to place yourselves heroically in the breach, from which greater wealth and greater influence have retreated, careless of Israel and Israel's glory. Let me remind you, that commanded as you are by an eternal statute, you must light up the lamp of knowledge, and tend it with efficiency—that you must rear up priests to arrange it before the Lord—**להעלות אתכם בפני כל** priests who will teach you **האומות** to elevate yourselves in the sight of all

nations. Then press forward, brethren, with your free-will offerings, and consecrate with your prayers and your hopes, a cause that is dear to Israel and important to her destinies. Press forward to support an enterprise which already has attracted the eyes of the world, and which, failing now, must challenge universal reproach. Press forward to testify how dear your faith and your people are to your hearts—how faithfully you serve, as missionaries of the One God, to preach truth, to spread peace, and to burn the lamp of knowledge before mankind.

או יבקע כשחר אורך “Then shall your light break forth as morning,” and soon, full soon, your efforts will be blessed and rendered fruitful. Stately halls of learning, nobly rivalling those of other faiths, will give admission to your sons; and shedding a pure and undefiled light upon them, will rear them to the service of your God, so that שתה מים “Ye may drink water from your own springs and running waters from the midst of your own wells.”

PRAYER.

Lord of life and God of truth! who art enthroned in light, from the emanation of which the world is illuminated; when night covered the earth, and the nations groped their way in the darkness of ignorance, Thou causedst Thy light to shine from Horeb on Thy people Israel, to be an everlasting guide to the children of men. Enlighten us also with Thy glorious radiance, and let us behold Thy effulgent beams, so

that we may walk in the light of truth and peace, and intelligence before Thee. Through all the dangers which beset the darkened path of our people, Thou hast always been with us to direct us by Thy rays; so, Lord, do Thou continue near to us, so that **אור נראה אור באורך** "by Thy enlightenment we may see the light." Kindle within us the fire of zeal and energy—the pure and holy flame of love for Israel and her cause, so that we place the lamp in Thy sanctuary—bring the oil of peace to feed it, and consecrate the priests to tend it, until by our efforts we see diffused abundantly **אור זרוע לצדיק ולישרי לב שמחה** "light that is sown for the righteous, joy for the upright of heart." Amen.

VII.

THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

וַיִּשַׁע ה' בְּיוֹם הַהוּא אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֶת מִצְרַיִם מֵת עַל שַׁפַּת הַיָּם וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת יַד הַגְּדוּלָּה
 אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיֵּרְאוּ הָעָם אֶת ה' וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְּה'
 וּבַמֶּשֶׁה עָבְדוּ :

“The Eternal saved Israel on that day from the hand of Egypt, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. Israel saw the great power which the Eternal exercised upon Egypt, and the people feared the Eternal, and they believed in the Eternal, and in Moses His servant.”—*Exodus* xiv. 30, 31.

BRETHREN, the early promise made to Abraham is at length fulfilled: the captivity of Egypt is over. From the depths of their affliction, God has heard the groans of Israel, and His love and faithfulness direct their deliverance. Moses and Aaron have appeared before the throne of Pharaoh, and have demanded in the name of the God of the Hebrews, that His people be sent forth to serve Him. This demand seeming unreasonable and audacious to the despot, has elicited his scorn and contempt, while it has invoked new inflictions on the persecuted race. At last the fierce wrath of God is poured out upon Pharaoh, his

land and his people; and when throughout the length and breadth of Egypt, there are death and desolation, grief and despair, the Eternal leads forth His hosts "with a mighty hand and a out-stretched arm," bearing them on eagles' wings from the darkness of slavery and error, to the light of liberty and truth. The opening verses of this day's portion inform us, that Pharaoh, on recovering from the consternation which paralysed him and his subjects on that night of terror, adopts the resolution to pursue and overtake his enfranchised bondsmen, and to wreak a fearful vengeance on them. He gives the order for pursuit, and forward go his countless hosts to brave the power which has lately prostrated him; forward with all the pomp of war, with all the force of arms, to avenge the horrors of that mysterious death which stalked through his dominions on the memorable midnight, when God made known His power to the heathen children of the land of Ham.

It is the fate of this expedition, my brethren, which we are to review to-day—the issue of that terrific battle which was fought in the midst of the sea-channel, between God and man; and where, although the clang of arms and the cry of war were never heard, there was a conquest gained which spread dismay and death around—a conquest as fearful to the vanquished, as it was glorious to the victor. In pursuing this theme, we shall have to consider Israel under three several aspects.

I. ISRAEL IN DESPAIR.

II. ISRAEL IN TRIUMPH.

III. ISRAEL IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

I.

The people are encamped before Pi-hahiroth, on the shores of the Red Sea, when the advance of Pharaoh is indicated; and, although but few days have elapsed, since God wrought so wonderfully in their behalf, they tremble at the approach of the very enemy whom He then subdued before them. The terror-stricken multitude glance rapidly at their position. They behold on the right hand and the left, the rugged hills of Suez. In front the roaring sea, lashing its sand-girt shores, and behind, they see advancing a powerful, revengeful and remorseless foe. Their consternation is at its height, and they are bowed down with anguish and despair. They deem all hope to be lost. Their lately-recovered freedom enjoyed sufficiently to create an earnest longing for its permanence, they imagine is about to be terminated by the triumphant arms of Pharaoh. Their happiness, of which as yet, they have only seen the dawn, is threatened with sudden annihilation. They hear the tramp of the approaching hosts, and their hearts fail at the sound. In their extremity they lose all recollection of what God has done for them until now,—they remember not the undying glories of that night when He led them forth from bondage. Even the pillar of fire which soars above them is unheeded, in the abject fear which seizes and overwhelms them. They could suffer oppression, is their cry; they would be content to endure the whip of the task-master, and groan on under the iron hand of Pharaoh's rule, but they are not prepared to die. No, they cling to life, although for them

it has had few charms which the clouds of persecution have not darkened. They thus approach their leader, and rebuke him with bitterness for what they deem the accomplishment of their woe. המבלי אין קברים במצרים לקחתנו למות במדבר מה זאת עשית לנו להוציאנו ממצרים : הלא זה הדבר אשר דברנו אליך במצרים לאמר חדל ממנו ונעבדה את מצרים כי טוב לנו : “ Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that thou hast brought us to die in the wilderness? What is it thou hast done to us by bringing us from Egypt? Is not this the thing which we told you in Egypt—Leave us alone and let us serve the Egyptians, for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness?” Amid this excitement, when dismay and horror have almost maddened the people, what is the conduct of their great leader? He has no word of reproach for their ingratitude,—he has no tone of harshness to resent their injustice. He has pity for their weakness, deep regrets for their want of faith in their Divine Guardian, the most benevolent consideration for their weak, but not unnatural apprehensions. He casts his eyes around, and perceives the same conjunction of difficulties which has disheartened them; but he has neither fear nor doubt in his breast. He knows that salvation is at hand,—he feels within him the firm, the irrepressible conviction that Omnipotence will achieve their deliverance. How it will be done, is not yet revealed to him, but responsive to the heroic faith which irradiates his spirit, he seeks to allay the fears of his charges, and to inspire them with confidence

by the assurance of safety. וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָעָם אֵל תִּירָאוּ הַתִּיַצְבוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת יְשׁוּעַת ה' אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם:
 "Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not. Stand ye, and ye shall see the salvation of the Eternal, which He will work for you to-day." But Moses sees the necessity of giving the people a still more emphatic assurance: one more calculated to disarm the apprehension which would now begin to grow among them—that even, if they are delivered from their present extremity, that deliverance will be only temporary. Not a week since, they marched forth triumphantly from Egypt, deeming their emancipation complete, whereas they now behold the same oppressive power, from which they then exultingly departed, approaching apace to recapture them. The only means therefore, of successfully reassuring them, is to promise the total annihilation of those foes: and this he does in the succeeding words כִּי אַתֶּם רֹאִיתֶם אֶת מִצְרַיִם הַיּוֹם לֹא תוֹסִיפוּ לִרְאוֹתָם עוֹד עַד עוֹלָם
 "Although ye see the Egyptians to-day, you shall never behold them more."

But how is this wondrous achievement to be effected? How is that mighty host, advancing in all the pride of conscious power, to be so suddenly, so completely overthrown? Untrained to war, untutored in arms, can these fear-stricken children of Israel attack and defeat the disciplined warriors of Egypt? These natural fears also, Moses seeks to allay, in the animating words which conclude his harangue ה' יִלָּחֶם לָכֶם
 "The Eternal will fight for you." No bow shall be bent, no sword unsheathed; all that the people

will be required to do while God works their salvation, is "to be silent," ואתם תחרישון to cease their murmurings against Him and His servant, and to confide in the power of their Heavenly Champion.

Brethren, we can now in imagination follow Moses, as he leaves his re-encouraged people to seek himself the God of his trust, to pour out before Him the emotions of his confiding heart, and to receive from Him the confirmation of that hope which burns within him. God answers him: responsive to his call, the voice divine is heard **מה תצעק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו** "Wherefore criest thou to me? Speak unto the children of Israel, and let them journey onward." Journey onward! Into those raging billows, to court the death they so fervently wish to deprecate? Into those raging billows, more cruel and remorseless still, than the tyrant who pursues them? Into those raging billows, that lashed by the increasing east wind, now roar as if eager for their promised prey? Even so, my friends, God has said it, and His command indicates the path of safety.

ויסע מלאך האלהים ההלך לפני מחנה ישראל וילך מאחריהם "The angel of the Eternal which went before the camp of Israel departed and went behind."

The rod of power is once more stretched forth, the wind waxes stronger, the waves congeal, and through the channel of the vasty deep, a pathway opens for the hosts of Israel. Onward they go,—fear lending swiftness to their footsteps—through that wonderful passage where walls of water, restrained into stability by a power divine, are on their right hand and on their left. Onward they go, casting ever a glance

of anxious fear behind, to mark the progress of their pursuers. They see the chariots and the horsemen of Pharaoh almost at their heels;—they hear the shouts of triumph which their oppressors, now certain of their capture, are sending to reverbrate among the surrounding rocks;—and anon they see them entering upon the pathway through the waters, which their own feet so lately trod; when lo! another cry assails their ears, a cry which tells not of mastery or of joy, but which utters the wail of defeat and death. Israel once in safety through the channel, the watery heaps dissolve; and as the rescued people gaze upon the change, joy returns into their bosom—exultation mounts up into their hearts, and grateful, loving and confiding now, they prepare themselves for triumph, because *וישע ה' ביום ההוא את ישראל מיד מצרים* “The Eternal has saved Israel from the power of Egypt; and Israel sees the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore.”

II.

We have, secondly, my brethren, to contemplate Israel in triumph; and here, we remain struck with admiration, at the emotions evinced by men whose natural impulses had never yet been corrected by lessons of religious moderation. No execrations are poured forth on their vanquished oppressors, no barbarous violence to the inanimate corpses which strew the strand, is recorded against them; but, powerfully affected by the events of the day, they elevate their hearts to God, and seek, with one accord, to pour out their emotions in psalmody and praise. They prepare

themselves with song and melody to celebrate no human power, skill, or genius, but to chant glory to the God of might,—to ascribe all honour, power, and majesty to the Lord of victory. Then raise the hymn of thanksgiving, O people of the Eternal! Lift high your voices, and sing in strains the sweetest and the boldest that bard has ever sung—in verses, the loftiest that imagination ever dictated, your thrilling, animating sea-song, the imperishable שירת הים.

אשירה לה' כי גאה גאה "I will sing to Thee, O God, for gloriously Thou hast triumphed. In vain the tyrant raged; futile were his vows of vengeance. He repented; Thou wert merciful. He battled with Thee, and is vanquished. מוס ורוכבו רמה בים The horse and his rider, the monarch and his subject, the captain and his legion hath the sea overwhelmed. Therefore, יהי לי עזי וזמרת יה, my strength and song is God, יהי לי ישועה my salvation He has become. With faith, O Lord, Thou girtest Thy children for the conflict, and, with a shield of grace, Thou turnedst aside destruction. Hail! Saviour and Guardian of Thy people! a holocaust of grateful hearts is offered up to Thee.

זה אלי "This is my God; not like the gods of Egypt, that cannot see, nor hear, nor save; זה אלי this is my powerful One, the Ancient of days, the Source of every good. And no strange God is He, whose greatness I now celebrate; no power, unknown before to man, a guardian only for the hour. No: אלהי אב He is my fathers' God—the ancient Patron of my progenitors: His goodness, love, and truth, displayed in olden times, live in my heart and mind. Then tremble, all ye nations, for ה' איש מלחמה ה' שמו ה'. The Eternal

is a warrior: Eternal is His name. The elements are His weapons—the winds and waves His implements of war. He calleth back the east wind, He releaseth the imprisoned floods, and downward pour the watery heaps, engulfing every foe. **מי כמכה באלים ה'** Who is like Thee among the mighty? Lord! who is like Thee **נורא תהלות** with holiness glorified, **נאדר בקודש** Thou, fearful in praises! **עושה פלא** Thou wonder-working God! Yet, it is *Thy* will that finite mortal dares to mar. It is against *Thy* power that man—frail man—presumes to magnify himself. **אמר אויב** ארדף אשיג אחלק שלל תמלאמו נפשי אריק חרבי תורישמו 'Said the enemy, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my soul shall be full of them; I will unsheathe my sword; my hand shall destroy them.' O then it was, that *Thy* powerful arm out-stretched, **נשפת ברוחך** Thou badest *Thy* ministering wind to blow, and while the oppressors trod the solid pathway through the deep, the death-knell of oppression tolled. **כסמו ים** The sea covered them. Wild shrieks burst from the vaunting Pharaoh, and as the mad waves triumphed over the sound, and lashed their shores with fury, **צללו כעופרת במים ארירים**, they sank like lead into the mighty waters."

III.

Having thus gazed upon Israel in despair, and rehearsed some accents of their song of triumph, it remains for us to contemplate them in acknowledgment. This, Scripture emphatically describes in the closing words of our text. **ויראו העם את ה' ויאמינו**

בְּה' וּבַמֶּשֶׁה עָבְדוּ "The people feared the Eternal, and they believed in the Eternal, and in Moses, His servant." Fear and confidence are the effects of God's "great power" in the hearts and minds of Israel. But surely, brethren, fear is no new emotion to the Israelites. Before the might of God was exercised upon Pharaoh, we saw them overwhelmed with fear, and under its influence, committing violence on the merits of their leader. Why then should Scripture bear testimony, that when the people saw the flood before them and the foe behind them, they feared; and that now, when the foe is vanquished, and their corpses strew the strand, they also fear? A very different feeling, my brethren, is the latter from the former fear: a purer, holier emotion than mere carnal dread. It is indeed alloyed with the grosser passion; for one of the elements of the fear which now possesses the people, is the apprehension that the majestic cloud which soars above them, might hurl down lightning shafts to slay them in a moment. They fear, indeed, lest the mighty wind, which built up walls of unstable water to save them, while it brought down floods to overwhelm their foes, might again pour out its fury, to scorch them with a burning blast, or to sweep them away like a torrent. They fear, lest the Omnipotent voice which spoke the words וַיִּסְעוּ "Let them journey onward," might pronounce another fiat which would presage their own destruction and strew the desert with their dead. All this they fear, but it is the ignoble fear of danger; and such is not the emotion which Scripture records in our text, such is not the emotion induced by the wonderful display of

supernal power. וִירְאוּ הָעָם אֶת ה' "The people reverence God:" they fall in prostrate veneration of His greatness; they feel the vastness of His might; they realize the majesty of His superintending Providence; and, praising Him for that greatness, loving Him for that goodness, they offer a spiritual sacrifice, grateful to their Benefactor, and grateful to their own immortal nature. But there is another and a higher feeling in their souls, that heaven-born emotion, faith. וַאֲמִינוּ בָהּ "The people believed in the Eternal." Reverence is inspired by transcendant power; faith is originated by transcendant love. Fear is a tribute to greatness; faith is a tribute to goodness. Wherever this abides, there must be a consciousness that the subject of our confidence is able and willing to keep us, and that this ability and disposition will never cease nor alter. Noah felt that faith within him, as under his handicraft the ark progressed, in which he was to survive a race of evil-doers. Abraham felt that faith within him, as his weary feet toiled up the ascent of Mount Moriah. Moses felt that faith within him, as he stretched forth his rod and bade the people journey onwards through the waste of waters. But all these, my brethren, were men whose spiritual instincts had been cultivated by communion with their God, from whom they had derived the sweet teachings of religion. Not so, these almost brutalised bondmen, just freed from thralldom, with all the prerogatives of liberty, but with none of the noble virtues to which it gives birth. They had been miraculously enfranchised; they had seen their fetters fall at the command of God; and though thus they had been

convinced of His power to protect them, they lacked the faith that He would do so. Therefore, every shadow on the desert sands, every sound in the still air, kindled fear and doubt in their bosoms. Now, however, that from the very depths of despair they have been lifted up; now that, expecting death, they have met with victory, they know and feel the willingness of God to save them, and they pour out their confidence full and entire in His mercy and goodness—confidence in the beneficence of His design—confidence in the competency of His will—confidence besides, in the authority, the skill, and the energy of His agent Moses. וִירָאוּ הָעָם אֶת ה' וַיֵּאֱמִינוּ בִּה' וּבִמֹּשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ. "The people feared the Eternal, and they believed in the Eternal and in Moses His servant."

And now, my brethren, let us, in conclusion, take to heart the lessons inculcated by the passage of Holy Writ, which has passed before our view. Let us be solemnly admonished by the fate of Pharaoh and his hosts, אֵל יִתְהַלֵּל חָכֵם בַּחֲכָמָתוֹ and let not the wise glory in his wisdom, וְאֵל יִתְהַלֵּל גִּבּוֹר בַּגְּבוּרָתוֹ nor let the strong exult in his strength, וְאֵל יִתְהַלֵּל עֲשִׂיר בַּעֲשָׂרֹו nor let the rich boast of his wealth. God is the Source of them all, and when our wisdom dictates the counsel of evil,—when our strong arm is raised for violence,—when our wealth and influence are being directed to unholy purposes, one stroke of omnipotence can destroy our vaunted advantage, and render us powerless as the worm. Pharaoh, as he gave the order for pursuit, thought of nought but hate and vengeance, passions which he fancied would soon be sated in the death or recapture of his liberated

bondsmen. Yet, brethren, we have seen his fate and the fate of his army; stricken down in the midst of their pride and arrogance—crushed by the Mighty Hand of the Eternal. In the like manner, brethren, impelled by the same whirlwind of passion—influenced by similar feelings of malice and revenge—we devise means to oppress our weaker neighbour; and we prosecute our sinful efforts till we see our victim overwhelmed by them, when suddenly those designs are frustrated, those efforts fail, and upon ourselves recoil the consequences of our evil acts.

But while God's anger threatens our evil courses and bids us fear the Lord, *ויראו העם את ה'*, His love invites us in our troubles, and bids us confide in Him *ויאמינו בה'*. The example in our text, assures us, that though our misfortunes be ever so overwhelming, if we but place a firm reliance upon God, and make His love and truth our stay, *they* will support us, and bring enlargement, peace, and comfort. I appeal to your own experience, my brethren, whether during your lives you have not seen this assurance verified. You, too, have had towering mountains of difficulties and anxieties on your right hand and on your left. Before you, has raged the sea of ruin and distress, opposing your progress, while behind you has pressed adversity, with a pursuing army of cares and troubles. Like Israel at Pi-hahiroth, you would have abandoned hope, if your religious spirit had not encouraged you to trust in God and journey onward. And your trust was not misplaced: you saw your difficulties overcome and your deliverance effected. Then continue, my dear

friends, to lean on that unfailing Power. Continue, like Israel in the text, to fear the Eternal, to reverence Him as He desires to be revered, with the whole soul, that you may remain ever estranged from evil and challenge not, like Pharaoh, His wrath and vengeance. Continue, too, to have faith in the Eternal, to lean upon Him as the surest support in the dark hour of adversity—to look up to Him for help and comfort in your sorrow and distress. And your faith will still be rewarded; for in the deepest gloom, you will be cheered by the conviction from on high—"That though your flesh and heart should fail, God will be the rock of your heart and your eternal portion."

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY Father, Great God of Israel! who dost protect us even in our rebellion, who lovest us even in our disobedience—teach us to reverence Thee, and to confide in Thy benign Guardianship for ever, so that our loyalty may promote our happiness, and glorify Thy majesty throughout the world. Make us feel, in Thy unending grace and favour, that true felicity is never found but in Thy service, that nothing is great but what tends to Thy honour, nothing noble that conforms not to Thy Law. On the humble and desponding, Lord! do Thou shed Thy holy spirit, to teach us that we are safe in leaning upon Thee,—that where Thou art, no human calamity can prevail, and that even as light and life proceeded from Thy treasury of good, so comfort and

instruction, wisdom and support are all so many streams that flow from Thee. And upon Israel, Thy people, Lord! we supplicate Thy grace. Fight for us, as Thou hast fought before. Make our way straight before us, redeem our scattered ones from the land of their captivity: and responsive to the prayer which we, to-day, have poured out to Thee, do Thou compassionate desolate Zion, ושוב שנית לקדשה ואל תוסף לגרשה והעלה אור שמשה ונסו הצללים: "Return again to wed her, and never more divorce her, but let the light of her sun ascend, that every shadow be dispelled, which darkens now the glory of her children." Amen.

VIII.

THE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

A SERMON FOR שבת הגדול

*Delivered at the Synagogue of the ק"ק שער השמים Spanish and Portuguese Jews,
Bevis Marks, London.*

On this day, emphatically styled שבת הגדול "the Great Sabbath," there is one idea ascendant in our minds, —one emotion predominant in our souls, and this has reference to the mighty event commemorated by the festival which approaches us apace. Yet, brethren, it is remarkable, that although the very proximity of the Pesach kindles within us the glow of holy joy—although, too, the incident which it celebrates is, and ever will be, from its intrinsic magnificence and stupendousness, imperishable as the most gigantic revolution that man ever witnessed; we are yet enjoined, expressly and emphatically, to remember that occurrence, and to perpetuate the memorial. That injunction, which will form the basis of our observations, stands thus recorded in holy writ, Exodus xiii. 3 ויאמר משה אל העם זכור את היום הזה 3 אשר יצאתם ממצרים מבית עבדים כי בחוק יד הוציא ה' אתכם מזה : "Remember this day on which ye are come out of Egypt, from the house of bondage, that with might of hand, it is the Eternal who has brought you thence."

The deliverance from Egypt, my brethren, full as it was of blessing for our oppressed fathers, to whom it brought enlargement--stamped, too, as it was with the seal of the Divine hand, was not an occurrence whose circumstances could ever be forgotten by our race. The wailings of Egypt smitten in her first-born sons--the sublime accents of Israel's song of triumph reverberating among the hills of Suez, were sounds which, once heard, could never be banished from the mind, but would form a never-failing theme of tradition through every succeeding age. Then wherefore are we, the objects of that signal redemption, expressly commanded to remember, that which we never could forget? Brethren, it is not literally the day of that mighty exodus--it is not even that deliverance itself, clothed though it be with the glory of the Eternal God, which is recommended to our remembrance. But it is the great saving object therewith connected--the object for which Israel went down to Egypt--the object for which Israel was oppressed in Egypt--the object for which Israel was redeemed from Egypt--that we are ordered to keep alive eternally in our minds and hearts; not as a mere unproductive idea, but as a great working truth, full of blessing for us and for all mankind. To arrive at that object, we must consider Israel under the three-fold phases of their preparatory life.

I. THE EMIGRATION.

II. THE PERSECUTION.

III. THE REDEMPTION.

I.

Idolatry prevailed throughout the universe. On every side, man was prostrating himself before the work of his own hand—an abject worshipper of a senseless image. The godly emanation which gives a spiritual nature to humanity, had become degraded and defiled by the grovelling superstition which filled the earth with a hideous idol-worship, and outraged thus the majesty of the only God. To eradicate this testimony of man's degeneracy, and to bring the human mind to a clear conception of spiritual truth, the Eternal determined to kindle a light *אש תמיד תוקד על המזבח* “whose flame burning upon his altar should never go out”—a light by which all earth should be illumined, and mankind guided to regulate their lives until the end of time. To effect this glorious object, God was pleased to select *גוי מקרב גוי* “a nation from the midst of a nation,” to make them the agents of His will, and so to watch over every circumstance connected with their spiritual and temporal good, that all the world might see in them the peculiar missionaries of salvation and of truth. But before that mission could be entrusted to the chosen people, they had first to be educated for the holy purpose. Even as the seed remains within the earth unseen, while the germ still merges surely into vitality, so for four hundred years was the preparation of Israel progressing slowly, yet securely, towards the development of the design of Omnipotence. Israel, therefore, went down to Egypt *בשבעים נפש* “numbering seventy souls.” To their purpose and intent they went as emigrants to the land where a beloved

kinsman was high in power, and could therefore strew sweet flowers on their path: to the purpose and intent of God, they went as apprentices to a noble though an arduous profession, with much of sorrow and suffering before them, but with the guarantee of eventual success, with glory and honour, peace and eternal life for their portion. They went, because it was the design of the Eternal God that they should feel the burning of the fire of adversity. Their saving mission could not be confided to them while they were enjoying national prosperity, with every material comfort at hand, else would they have refused to co-operate in the great work of regeneration, because that work would fetter and restrain their lusts. Forward, then, to the Land of Ham, thou venerable patriarch, who goest to seek a loved son's embrace. Forward, ye sons of Jacob, agitated as ye are by mixed sentiments of love and fear for the injured brother, now high in the world's repute. Forward to the broad lands of Goshen, to abide under the protecting shadow of Joseph's name and influence; the Eternal God accompanies you—His ministering angels lead the way before you, for ye go to work out the object of His Omniscience—ye are the instruments of His loving-kindness to the world of men.

II.

And now, my brethren, the second phase dawns upon us, and we find the wise Joseph dead, and his virtues quite forgotten by the Pharaoh who is now lord over Egypt. Israel, no longer the happy herdsmen of Goshen, are yet increased into a nation,

mighty in number, but a nation withal of bondsmen, with the crushed spirit and the broken hearts that unfailingly belong to serfdom. And what a bitter fate is theirs? Uncomplainingly they labour to render great the name of Egypt's monarch—to build those monuments of his celebrity which would transmit his memory to distant ages—long—long after his sovereignty should have crumbled into dust. They give their manly vigour to erect those cities which are to contain the treasures of the tyrant's realms—treasures augmented, if not created, by the wisdom and integrity of their own illustrious progenitor. But their domestic joys, the only thing left them in their changed condition, are now to be assailed by the hand of murder. Yes, the despot is jealous of the increasing number of that people who have so many wrongs to avenge on him and on his country. He watches with alarm the swelling ranks of those whom he has dared to enslave, without the right of conquest or of purchase; and he now trembles as he thinks of the fearful retribution they would wreak on him, if they should ever regain their liberty. Therefore went forth the command, that murder—the massacre of innocents should be employed to stop, at every hazard, the progress of that alarming increase;—that redoubled labour should be imposed upon the existing hosts, so that exhaustion and disease might enfeeble them and diminish their numerical importance, as surely as infanticide would stay the progress of their progeny towards avenging manhood. **וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם בַּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה**. “They embittered their lives, saith Holy Writ, with a hard bondage,” but that bondage,

consuming and spirit crushing though it was, only reached the climax of severity, when their family joys and home happiness were assailed. Embittered were their lives, indeed, when the father could no longer forget his miseries, by hoping for the advent of that son, for whom we all devoutly pray, to perpetuate our name and lineage. Embittered were their lives, when the mother could no longer think, with joyous anticipation, of the day her unborn treasure should be ushered into light, to comfort her under her oppressing fate, because the destroyer was ready to lay a ruthless grasp upon it at its birth, and if a male child, hurry it to death ere yet it had awakened into life. Here, then, my brethren, was oppression without parallel in the annals of the world—oppression, which deliberately aimed at the very existence of a people, in whom the sacred laws of hospitality had been outraged; and who, after subserving the aggrandisement of a despot, were now mercilessly doomed to extermination, by an intensification of cruelty and barbarity. But this oppression, my brethren, places Israel in a condition to further the design of the Eternal. Bowed down under the rigours of Egyptian tyranny, they have but one sustaining hope, and that is imparted by a ray of light which they see dimly through the distant past: a ray of light which directs their hearts to Heaven, and reminds them of a God of truth, from whom redemption is to proceed. True it is, that of this God, but faint and erring notions now survive within them—that the pure patriarchal worship of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has been corrupted by the heathen-

ism of Egypt; nevertheless there are some lingering recollections of the God their fathers taught them to adore, and these gain strength and vigour as they pray for help and deliverance, even as the reposing heart is strengthened in its faith, by each appeal it makes for succour. They are thus, prepared to adore the hand that should bring to them enlargement, from their condition of misery and woe; they are prepared to recognise at once the supernal might which can alone, release them **מכור הברזל** "from that iron furnace." They have been qualified in the school of adversity, to become the agents of the Most High—are now attuned unreservedly to do His will, therefore, **ויוצא עמו בששון ברנה את בחיריו** "He brings forth His people with joy—His chosen ones with exultation." **בעבור ישמרו חקיו ותורתיו ינצרו** "That they might preserve His statutes—and guard his doctrines."

III.

And now, my brethren, with the opening of the third phase, the work of expiation commences. Before the tyrant of Mizraim, there appear two old men who, undismayed by the surrounding ministers of this despot's will, demand, in the name of the God of the Hebrews, the complete and immediate emancipation of His people. What! Shall the greatest monarch of his age, manumit a nation of his bondsmen—bondsmen who are immortalizing his name by building those everlasting pyramids—bondsmen whose industry has reared the towers of Pitom and Raamses? And, at the simple bidding of two men, unaccredited by aught, save certain signs, which at his command the

necromancers of his court can imitate? No, saith Pharaoh, **לֹא יָדַעְתִּי אֶת ה' וְגַם אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אֵשְׁלַח**, "I know not Adonai, nor will I let Israel go." But amid the indignation which marks this arrogant reply, amid the wrath and fury which inflame the tyrant, he dares not speak one word which might endanger the safety of those weak old men, who stood before him without physical protection, to discharge the embassy of God. With words of scorn and daring on his lips, he succumbs beneath an unseen power, when he dreams not of violating the panoply of divine guardianship which surrounds the future priest and prophet of God's people. But Pharaoh refuses to let the people go, and, by that refusal, he arrays himself against Omnipotence. Weak man essays a struggle with Almighty God, the creature is in arms against the Creator! And now is poured out the vengeance of the Lord upon that devoted land, its monarch, and its people. Each element becomes the minister of wrath divine, and nature's laws are overturned to humble the despot's pride, to rescue the chosen servants of the Lord, and vindicate through earth the might, the love, and the faithfulness of God. Egypt's proud stream is turned to blood, its teeming life perished in a day: loathsome reptiles invade the habitations of the Egyptians, and overspreading every part of their domain, make food and rest disgusting. Noisome vermin seize on their bodies, to make their life a living torture; reptiles and insects of varied species next commingle, to infest the land, and make the very atmosphere swarm with noxious life. Pestilence assails their flocks

and herds, and strews the country with their cattle, perishing and perished: disease of the most repulsive nature seizes upon each denizen of that land; and then, the wrath of God displays itself in the destroying hail storm, when the fire runs along the ground, striking terror into every heart. Now, we see the advancing cloud of destructive life, obscuring the light of day, and spreading through the length and breadth of the land, consumes the staff of life; then for three whole days the sun sheds no light upon Egypt—its borders are stricken with palpable, terrific darkness. Lastly, the destroying angel goes forth over the land, to smite it in its vigour, and on one memorable night, each firstborn son of Egypt is prostrate in the dust. Then, ascends throughout the land of Ham, one loud, awful, bitter cry—the cry which heralds the departure of God's people, by proclaiming that retribution has been wreaked, justice satisfied, and the omnipotence of Adonai acknowledged in that land of gross idolatry. And now, even amid the terrors of that night, the command goes forth, and high in the heavens, the pillar of fire, which shows the presence of the Eternal God, leads the van of Israel's hosts, and the seventy who thither came, three centuries before, go forth in triumph, six hundred thousand men—their wives and children in addition. Forward then again, ye blessed ones, emancipated by the Mighty Arm of God—forward from the field of Zoan, where so much misery has been your lot. Forward to the shores of ים סוף, where the Lord will fight for you, and consummate the woe of Pharaoh. Forward to the foot

of Horeb, where the plan of the Eternal God is to be be detailed unto you,—the revelation made of the holy end and aim of all your antecedent sufferings.—To Horeb, brethren, we accordingly are come to listen to the design of God; and prostrate before the holy mount, we gaze with veneration at its summit, where sits enthroned the glory of the Eternal, from whom the awe-inspiring revelation is to come.

אתם ראיתם אשר עשיתי למצרים ואשא אתכם על כנפי נשרים ואביא אתכם אלי : ועתה אם שמוע תשמעו בקולי ושמרתם את בריתי והייתם לי סגולה מכל העמים כי לי כל הארץ : “Ye have seen what I did to Egypt, how I bare you on the wings of eagles, and brought you unto me. And now, if ye will hearken to my voice, and keep my covenant, ye shall be to me a peculiar treasure above all people that to me be all the earth.”

Here then, brethren, is revealed the object for which we have been seeking—the object at once of Israel’s emigration—their sufferings—and their redemption. “That they might be qualified for the mission of propagating God’s laws and attributes throughout the world—that ignorance and superstition be uprooted—idol worship effectually, and for ever extirpated, and all mankind be prostrated in holy brotherhood before one common Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor. Amid the supernal manifestations of God’s glory,—while the thunder waxed loud—the lightning-flash struck terror to the souls of that congregation, and the blast of the Shofar made the mountain quake to its foundation, the sacred mission was accepted, and the everlasting law, by whose agency the great end was to be worked out, was revealed,

eliciting at once their cordial, unanimous concurrence כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה "All that the Eternal hath said, we will do."

Now, my brethren, let us pause to ask whether we have been true to that engagement, faithful to that mission? When the promise of the Eternal was fulfilled, and we stood in earth, a whole nation of divine missionaries, did our example promote the glory of God, and spread the knowledge of His name? Alas! no. Instead of bringing the world to Him, we followed the world from Him; and therefore it is, that we are again in bondage,—therefore it is שלא אחד בלבד עמד עלינו אלא שבכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו לבלותינו "that not one alone has risen against us, but in every generation, some rise up to exterminate us." Turn we to the annals of the present captivity, and we shall find whole pages written in characters of blood; we shall read of death and destruction, fire and sword, rapine and bloodshed, directed against suffering Israel, to extirpate our name and our religion. How is it, then, that we yet exist after such unparalleled miseries?—that, although assailed on every side by the devouring flame of persecution, yet like the bush at Horeb, though burning with fire, we are not consumed? Because now, as of old, הקדוש ברוך הוא מצילנו מידם "the Holy One, blessed be He, has delivered us from their hands." In His love for us, He raised up two messengers, to stand before the Pharaoh of intolerance, and to plead for us. Know you those delegates of Omnipotence, the modern Moses and Aaron of the present bondage? Moses is represented by the spirit of Education, Aaron by the

spirit of Religion. Yes, brethren, Education and Religion are those messengers, and before them as gigantic a revolution has been wrought as that of yore in Egypt. While sorrow fills our hearts, as we dwell on the iron oppression we have endured, pride and admiration glow in our souls as we contemplate the earnestness with which we have clung to our schools, and our uniform zeal and energy in the sacred cause of education. It is true, my brethren, that the sphere of our mental culture was limited by intolerance,—that we were long excluded from the walk of science, art, and literature, and could only apply ourselves to those pursuits which served our modern Pharaohs. But, secretly we laboured, taught, and studied, until, despite the persecuting vigilance of our oppressors, we sent forth to the world bright luminaries of learning, great geniuses with imperishable reputations. Steadily we have advanced in the development of the mind, profiting by every extension of privilege, by every show of tolerance, pleading at every step for extended liberty and enlarged sphere of action,—until now, that in the civilized world, the Jew can be honoured for his morals, admired for his principles, and valued for his intellect;—now that, whether you soar in the region of literature, or descend into the mines of science, whether arts or letters engage your view, you find some Jewish name pre-eminent, some Jewish genius lauded. And how has our religion pleaded for us? How has the Moses of our devout spirit prevailed against the great Pharaoh of idolatry, surrounded as he is by the power and influence of his ministers—Persecution, Superstition, and Bigotry?

Our champion had nought to oppose to this phalanx of might but his simple rod—the staff and stay of Israel—the law of the Immutable; that wonder-working law, which alone has preserved us amid the wreck of nations, identified us with the author of our commission, and asserted our right of teaching under warrant of Omnipotence. Led on by that champion, protected by that guardian rod, we have done much, and we are doing much, my brethren. Little by little, with slow but certain strides, we are fulfilling our mission to the world. Errors are vanishing before the light which we diffuse, mountains of prejudice are falling before the moral force which we exert. Then, onward, brethren, is the word; let our religious fervour demand that the faith of Israel be free from thralldom, that it be not oppressed by perverted doctrines, by prejudiced dogmata. Already we have made the Pharaoh of Idolatry concede principle after principle, and he trembles at the divine power we exert. His courtiers, who are the strength of his throne, are abandoning him; and though they have not yet reached our camp, they are coming, brethren,—they are coming to consummate God's wise intent. One courtier reproached his monarch with his image-loving formulæ, denounced them as offensive to Heaven, and he deserted to give rise to what is called the Protestant dissent. Another censured the importance with which he vested form to the exclusion of spirit, pronounced that tendency inimical to purity, and *he* deserted to originate another schism.* Another

* Calvinism.

dared to raise our own watchword in the Pharaoh's presence, and proclaiming ה' אחד "there is but One God," he also forsook the throne to produce Unitarianism. Another hazarded a fear that the monarch erred when he pronounced our covenant cancelled, declared that nought exists to revoke our high appointment, and he, too, departed and led another dissent.* Thus gradually they are approaching us, and soon, full soon, *they* will bring *themselves* to fall with us before the throne of Him, from whom we hold our high commission. Then, Brethren, that last redemption shall occur, when the exodus of Mosaism from the prejudices, the misconceptions, the idolatry of Gentilism, shall be achieved, wrought by *our* energy, secured by *our* instruction, effected by *our* might, and by virtue of that great legation, which made Israel a holy people and a priestly race. And then too, brethren, shall be realised the glorious promise of the Lord, predicted through the prophet, in this morning's Haftorah והשיב לב אבות על בנים "He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children;" for then shall the great parent of revelation, "Torath Moshe," shine benignantly upon all the world, where no more idolatry will abide; ולב בנים על אבותם, and the hearts of the children—those varied creeds which have been born of her, shall discard their impurity, and shall return into their parent source, through whose spiritual blessings, חמלא הארץ לדעת כבוד ה', כמים יכסו עלים "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Eternal, as the waters cover the sea."

* Sabbatarianism.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God! Thy children are here before Thee, with hearts and minds directed to Thy approaching Passover—the glorious festival which gave a boon to Israel and the world, by teaching men the principles of liberty and truth. We thank Thee, Lord, for the care with which Thou hast preserved us alive, to witness the recurrence of this season;—we thank Thee for the gracious bounties of peace and spiritual repose to which Thou dost again invite us by Thy approaching feast-days; but more than all, we thank Thee that Thou hast implanted in our souls an appreciation of what is noble and good—an admiration for the many moral truths involved in the Pesach, its lessons and its duties. Grant, Father, that we value ever the doctrines of that ennobling festival, and bring them into activity. And when its festive hours shall assemble us, and we stand before Thee with praise and thanksgiving, to acknowledge the mercies of a past redemption, do Thou fill our hearts with all those sweet emotions that lead to good results—to purity and virtue, obedience and love. So, Father! advance Thy cheering feast of liberty, that it may bring joy to our hearts, happiness to our homes, and holy gratitude to our souls and the souls of all Thy people! Amen.

IX.

FAITH.

A SERMON FOR THE PASSOVER.

BRETHREN, the rigours of winter are over, and the smiling festival of spring is here. The sacred Passover assembles us once more, to cheer us with its reminiscences, — to improve us with its lessons. There is no festival of our religion, my brethren, that addresses us with so much emphasis, as well in its recollections of the past as in its hopes for the future. There is no occasion in our ceremonial cycle which speaks to us in such affectionate terms concerning our duties and obligations as Israelites. We have, on former occasions, seen the פסח developing the grand principles of light to the world—we have regarded it as teaching mankind the civilizing doctrines of liberty and truth. We will to-day consider it as illustrative of a duty, the most comprehensive and the most sublime that can devolve on man. To this end we direct your attention to Exodus xii. 21, 22, ויקרא משה לכל זקני ישראל ויאמר אלהם משכו וקחו לכם צאן למשפחתיכם ושחטו הפסח: ולקחתם אגרת אוזב ומבלתם בדם אשר בסף והגעתם אל המשקוף ואל

שתי המוות מן הדם אשר בסף ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתח ביתו עד בקר “ Moses called to all the elders of Israel, and he said unto them, draw out and take unto you a lamb according to your families and slay the passover. Ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin, none of you shall go out from the entrance of his house until the morning.”

In this text are embodied a great trial and a great triumph. It conveys an injunction, obedience to which constituted in God's eyes the highest merit our fathers could possess—merit sufficient to render them worthy of redemption—the merit of faith. From this simple observance, we shall presently see shining forth resplendently, a faith, glorious to its object and honourable to its possessors, a faith whose real character must challenge universal admiration when viewed as we propose to develope it, in its three independent elements.

I. FAITH INFLUENCING ACTION.

II. FAITH INFLUENCING BELIEF.

III. FAITH INFLUENCING HOPE.

I.

Faith influencing action is unquestionably, faith robed in its noblest character; and nowhere can we find it so forcibly illustrated, as in the event to which our text refers. Let your minds revert to the scene of that event. Gaze in imagination upon the fathers in Israel, as they seek their yearling for the paschal sacrifice. Behold them absorbed in their preparations,

their very hearts in the holy work, while their expectant bosoms throb with excitement as they count the weary hours which drag along their slow length until eventide approaches. Ever and anon their spirits soar upwards in thought to what the advancing night is to bring forth;—their breasts are agitated with the hope of happiness and freedom promised to them ere morn shall dawn again. The shadows of night close in, and now, see every father in his household, a priest before the domestic altar, prepared to make the sacrifice of the passover, which, to him and all that household, is to be initiatory either of faith and freedom, or of doubt and destruction. The sacrifice complete, behold! he dips a hyssop sprig into its blood, and solemnly he strikes with it the door-posts of his house, leaving there the impress of his blow—a gleaming streak of gore.

Here pause we to inquire, what means that simple ceremonial? Why is the same blood-stain upon the threshold of every Israelitish home? It is the emblem of faith—faith writ with the blood of grateful sacrifice—faith giving defiance to man's present oppression, and confiding in God's prospective protection—faith which is to confront the destroying angel as he passes over Egypt, and to drive him from each gore-stained habitation. To use the words of an ancient sage, אין הדם מונע הנוגף ולא מניעתו מביא הנוגף אבל למדך הכתוב כי מי שהאמין בהק'בה אמונה שלמה ותלה בו בטחנו ולא חשש לאימת פרעה וגזרתו וזבה בפרהסי' תועבת מצרים ונתן מדם הפסח על המזוזות ועל המשקוף The blood on the door-posts could not literally restrain the destroyer, neither

could its absence incur his visitation, but whoever, unmoved by the fear of Pharaoh and his decrees, should sacrifice the idol of the Egyptians and sprinkle the door-posts and lintel with its blood, would manifest that he believed in the Holy One with a perfect faith, and reposed in Him his trust. Thus he would be accounted righteous and faithful in the sight of God, worthy of the redemption which the morrow was to bring about.”*

To understand this, my brethren, I bid you remember, that, when the hand of the Eternal was heavy upon the tyrant king, and his fear struggling with his wrath, he sought to moderate the demands of Moses, by asking him to let the people keep their feast in Egypt, the prophet answered, **הֲזֶן נֹזֶבֶחַ אֶת הָעֶבֶת מִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִסְקְלוּ** “Behold, can we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?” Moses knew the religious superstitions of that idolatrous nation. He had penetrated into the arcana of Egyptian hierology, and thus was competent to estimate the vengeance which those benighted heathens would wreak on the insulters of their divinity. Yet those very lips which, in the words just quoted, rejected the idea of sacrificing the ram and its kind in Egypt, but a few days later, gave expression to the command which forms our text. Then wherefore this change of sentiment, so sudden and unexpected? Because now, Israel are to rise above the fear of their oppressors; they must deliberately challenge their persecutors, and they are required to make the defiance as

* רְבִינִי בְּחַיִּי מ' בֵּא *

public as it can possibly be—to write it in characters of blood before their dwellings. The wavering heart, the fear-fraught spirit, will not dare obey the Divine command, lest it may call down the fate pre-mentioned by Moses. But Israel are on the eve of regeneration. Faith is in their souls—they despise man and cleave unto God; and that faith they carry into action by obeying the voice of the Eternal, therefore יציאם מחשך וצלמות ומוסרותיהם ינתק “He brings them forth from darkness and the shadow of death, and breaks their bonds asunder.”

II.

We are next to discover, through the text, faith displayed in belief—faith in the correct religious opinions which that regenerated people had just re-adopted. The little band of Israelites who went down to Egypt, devoted to their pure patriarchal worship, had, during centuries of bondage, considerably degenerated in their physical, moral and religious condition. Under the rigours of an oppressive thralldom like that of Egypt, it was natural to expect such retrogression. Slavery at all times demoralises man, cramps his intellect, debases his sentiments, and checks the aspirations of his soul; but when that slavery is characterised by cruelty and persecution akin to that of Pharaoh, it becomes a hateful agent, most powerful in reducing the sentient spirit to a resemblance with the mere instinct of the brute. Thus it was that Israel gradually lost their early faith in the land of their oppressors, forgetting daily more and more the religious teaching of their fathers,

and advancing meanwhile in the degraded doctrines of Egyptian theology, until they probably came themselves to worship Isis and Osiris, the divinities of Egypt, and to confide in Aries her tutelary planet. Now that Moses and Aaron with their exhortations, their signs and their wonders, had convened the people to hear the design of the Omnipotent—now that the hand of the Eternal had so miraculously manifested itself in their cause, they bethought them of the old paths of pure religion, and strove to return to them. But ere their redemption could be effected, they were required to prove their fealty; and therefore the command of our text is enjoined, requiring a general united demonstration of their faith in their father's God. The lamb, sacred in Egyptian ideas and Egyptian prejudices, is ordered to be slain, its flesh to be used for food, its blood smeared upon the door-posts, to mark their despal of the idol, their rejection of its fancied protection, and their unconditional repose upon the "strong hand and outstretched arm" of the Eternal. Can you not conceive the struggles of conscience in the breasts of the weak—the whisperings of fear in the ears of the wavering? Can you not fancy the hope for freedom battling with the dread of slavery?—the evidences of supernal preparations conquering the pain of present infliction—all uniting to carry conviction to those weak and wavering sons of Jacob? Conviction does come at last, my brethren, even to their hearts. Obedient and faithful, they gird themselves for the issue, refusing *לעז במעו* *פרעה ולחמות בצל מצרים* "to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh—to trust in the shadow of

Egypt." The destroying angel going forth through the land, recognises on their doors the blood-streak which proclaims idolatry rejected, superstition despised. Faith in their belief, is thus demonstrated by the regenerated Israelites, and while destruction is rife among their late oppressors, they eat their paschal sacrifice and await the summons of the Lord.

III.

But we have said that in that demonstration, our fathers also exhibited faith in another degree—faith in their hope; what was that hope, my brethren? Glance at their fate in Egypt, and it must soon appear as constituting the only bright spot in their miserable existence. The condition of Israel under the tyrants of Mizraim, was undoubtedly one of unparalleled suffering and woe. Every day served to increase the rigour of their bondage—to originate new means of destroying their peace, their happiness and their lives. From the clemency of their masters they had nought to expect. It would have been madness for them to hope that the oppressing hand would ever be relaxed—that Egyptian ears would ever hearken to the groans of Hebrew hearts. Reflections like these, my brethren, arose without doubt in the minds of those afflicted bondsmen, banishing all hope from their hearts, and inspiring them with a slavish brutal fear for their lords. It was to men thus conditioned, that the promise of enlargement was conveyed;—it was to their eyes, moistened with tears of anguish, that the view of unrestrained freedom, peace and happiness

was unfolded. וַיֵּאֱמָן הָעָם וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ כִּי פָקַד ה' אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. "And the people believed when they heard that God had visited the children of Israel, and that He had seen their affliction, and they bowed and worshipped." Although their souls were tainted by idolatrous predilections, they now revered the power which promised them redemption, and waited, O how anxiously! for the hour of salvation. At last, when they are expecting the final triumph of the Lord over Pharaoh, they are called upon to perform the ceremonial of our text,—a ceremonial which, if their hope should be confirmed, would sever them for ever from the grasp of their task-masters; but which, if their hope should be disappointed, would assuredly entail upon them the wrath and vengeance of merciless foes. It is now that they bethink them of what lies before them. Supposing they *should* go forth from Egypt under the shadows of that night, could not the relentless Pharaoh pursue, perhaps re-capture them? And what if they should escape his vengeance, were there not other dangers before them, sufficient to appal the stoutest hearts? Either they must journey through the lands of nations allied with their late despotic lord, and therefore hostile to their emancipation, or they must enter on the arid desert—yawning before them like the mouth of a vast sepulchre—the desert perilous to all who traverse it, but especially so to travellers so ill provided as they were. To use their own remark afterwards expressed טוֹב לָנוּ עֲבוֹד אֶת מִצְרַיִם מִמּוֹתָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר. "It would be better to toil in Egypt than to die in the wilderness." These, bre-

thren, were the reflections of that auspicious passover eve, reflections whose serious import was heightened by the very proximity of the event to which they bore relation. But the choice was made, and wisely made **יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּטַח בַּה' עֶזְרָם וּמִגֹּנָם הוּא** "Israel had faith in the Eternal,—He was their help and shield. Their future they confided to His promise—their fate they reposed in His might. To them the tyranny of Egypt lived but in the past; their ardent hope for freedom was now intensified by faith, and they slew their paschal sacrifice, and girt their loins to eat its flesh, and listened for the signal of redemption—for the watchword that was to summon them to liberty. To liberty they went forth, brethren, as you know; and marching that day from Egypt under the supernal guidance of that pillar of fire which pointed out the path of light and freedom, they presented at once, a picture, whose beauties were never to fade from the perception of their children, and a mirror, in which posterity should for ever view and judge themselves.

Let us then gaze at our own condition, through a contemplation of the incident recorded in the text. Let us place before our view, our fathers' faith, as developed in their act, their belief, and their hope, and let us heed the lesson which such faith inculcates.

First, brethren, we have seen against what weighty personal considerations, our ancestors in Egypt, carried their faith into action. They, be it remembered, were only arrived at the spiritual dawn which preceded the rising sun of revelation, while we are enjoying its meridian brightness, after three thousand

years of vigorous light, warmth, and animation. Yet, when the Pesach brings their faith before us, to contrast it with our own, we must perforce admit that *we* are deficient. Do we dare entertain a doubt thereof? Can we presume to possess confidence in God, even equal to what they exhibited in Egypt? I summon you, complaining sufferers, to stand forth! You that have felt the hand of God upon you, and have arraigned his wisdom—you that have been burnt with His displeasure, and have impugned His justice. In your sorrows, you groaned and murmured, ascribed your woes to chance or fate, but your hearts recognised not God. You were deficient in faith, and you refused to lean where alone support could be found.

Stand forth too, Sabbath breakers! the Pesach summons you to exercise your faith in God. You go forth to the field and gather in your manna on this holy day, urging for your plea, that ye are poor, and forgetting **לֹא עַל הַלֶּחֶם לִבְדּוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל כָּל מוֹצֵא פִּי ה' יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם** "That it is not on bread alone that man liveth, but upon all that cometh out of God's mouth doth man live." When you lean upon your arm of flesh, heedless of God's implied promise to give you **לֶחֶם מִשְׁנֶה** "A double share of food," do you not want faith? Your poverty could never drive you to violate God's word, if confidence were in your heart,—faithfulness in your soul. But, alas! you are not all entitled to urge that plea, vain though it be, in extenuation of your guilt. There are among you, men whom God has prospered—some blessed with affluence,

others rising into wealth, who yet wantonly desecrate the holy day, by appearing in the field. Such attend, indeed, the services of the sanctuary, but hardly are these closed, and while the words of sabbath praises are yet hovering over their lips, they hurry onward to their craftsmen to urge on their labours—to press the work which should be forgotten on that day. Will *you*, too, to whom conscience applies this charge—will *you*, too, dare allege necessity? If avarice is at your side, dictating this hateful plea, however false and sinful it may be, still ye are obnoxious to the charge, that ye have no faith. Your remote ancestors, from their graves in the wilderness, reprove you by their history. This sacred festival, at each recurrence, year after year, rebukes you by its solemnities. This text, divinely spoken centuries ago, condemns you with its reminiscences. Then let these united influences have force to convince you of your evil, and to urge you on the path of duty, which obedience indicates, and faith adorns and fortifies, להיות ב'ה מבטחך “that thy trust may be in the Eternal.” And let them assure you, too, for your support, that though your sabbath labours will never make you rich, your obedience will call down blessings on your efforts, because בומה ב'ה ירושן “He who has faith in God will be made fat.”

Secondly. You have seen Israel in Egypt faithful in their belief, although that belief was to that generation a new one, just propounded, hardly understood. Have you such faith, when day after day, you condemn your religion as superstition—its ceremonies as unmeaning and frivolous? Have you such faith,

when your time-honoured customs summon the smile of derision to your lips, and you presume to call men hypocrites, because, more faithful than you, they cling with fervour to every rite of their religion? Have you such faith, when neglectful of your religious duties you do not hide your head in shame, but sit in the scorner's seat and exult, impiously exult in your degeneracy? Alas, brethren, your fathers have suffered too much for their fidelity to their religion, that you should sneer at, and condemn what they were proud to die for. Let then the Pesach check that spirit of the age, which impiously aims at desecrating the holy, at polluting the pure, and at modernising the ancient and time-honoured. Let the Pesach summon you to penetrate into the meaning of your religious observances, so that you may neither obey without understanding, nor ridicule without knowing. Let it dispose you to cherish those ceremonies, as the very vitality of your religion—to cling to them with a faith, akin to that your fathers showed in Egypt. Then will you be true to the recollection of that great redemption, whose influence will shed peace over you, and will leave you at the close of your festive days, better men and better Israelites.

Finally, my brethren, we have recognised in the conduct of our ancestors, faith displayed in their hope for redemption. We, too, my friends, have a similar hope, a hope nourished for two thousand years—a hope whose accomplishment is the theme of our prayers, in every clime—in every generation. In

the full glare of prosperity, and in the dark hour of adversity we have hoped alike, with all the ardour of Jewish hearts, and have prayed with all the fervour of Jewish spirits. This expected deliverance has been the pole star of our people in their dispersions, as day after day the orison has gone forth from our lips, **שֶׁאֵין לָנוּ לִקְבֹּץ גְּלוּיֹתֵינוּ וּקְבָצָנוּ יַחַד מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנֻפֹת הָאָרֶץ** “Lift up the banner to collect our dispersed, and gather us together from the four corners of the earth.”

Since, then, this redemption is so bound up with our religion,—is so constantly and prominently before our eyes and upon our lips, can it be necessary to inculcate faith in its accomplishment? Alas, even so brethren. It is another evidence of the spirit of the age, that men begin to sneer at divine promises—to question the advantages they would confer. They call it Utopian, to expect that men will ever quit the homes and possessions which they now enjoy, to go forth to the distant East in search of national independence. They call it Utopian, to hope that the now despised few will ever possess the sovereignty of the world;—ever occupy the proud position assured to them by the word of God. Renouncing the belief in Messianic promises, they renounce the hope of Israel, and voluntarily sever themselves from the glorious destiny of our people. To such, my brethren, the Pesach addresses its affectionate remonstrance. It bids you remember that **“לא אִישׁ אֶל וִיכֹב”** God is not a man that he should be false,” **דְּבַר אִשֶּׁר יֵצֵא מִפִּי לֹא יָשׁוּב אֵלַי רִיקָם כִּי אִם עֲשֵׂה אֶת אֲשֶׁר הַפֶּצַתִּי וְהִצְלִיחַ אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּי** “The word that goes forth from my mouth shall not return thither empty, but shall

do what I desire, and prosper in that for which I sent it." Therefore, trust you firmly in the hope of beholding your people's glory. Continue to look for it with anxious expectation,—to pray for it at early morn, at noontide and at even, with all the fervour you can command. **קוה אל ה'** Trust ye, as ever, in the Eternal **חזק וימן לבך וקוה אל ה'** while you strengthen and fortify your hearts, trust in the Eternal; and in His own good time your ears will hear the trumpet blast, your eyes behold the banner of redemption; and your hearts will throb exultingly in your bosoms, as you gaze upon the myriads of your people on the march to glory, while all the earth shall resound with the praises of the ransomed hosts, who homeward press **והשתחו לה' בהר הקדש בירושלים** to prostrate themselves before Adonai, at the holy mount in Jerusalem.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God! who led our armies from slavery to freedom, from misery and woe, to joy, and happiness: who wert thus faithful to thy promise, vouchsafed unto our father Abraham, and heardst the captive's plaint from the depths of their distress! We humbly invoke Thee to-day, the anniversary of our first redemption, to remember us for the last deliverance, to which Thy word has made us direct our hopes and prayers. Lord! when Thou wroughtest so wonderfully in the land of Ham, it was by faith our fathers' worthiness was tried; so we feel, Father, that it is only our constancy to Thee that now can win the

mercy reserved for us, and approximate the period of the final gathering. O give us strength for the conflict with doubt, and endue us with Thy spirit, so that faith may gird us and hope fortify us. Lead us to the path of duty, so that when the Pesach summons us, we shall have willing ears for its teachings,—obedient hearts for the commands of virtue which it originates. And when, instructed by its sublime lessons, we manifest by act, that we have faith in Thee, faith in Thy doctrines, faith in Thy promises,—we pray Thee, Lord, to bless us in our dispersion with the treasures of Thy grace, even peace, and plenty, health, and prosperity, and to hasten the period **“ ופרויי ה' ישובון ובאו ציון ברנה ”** when the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with exultation.” Amen.

X.

THE INHERITANCE OF JACOB.

A SERMON FOR שבועות FEAST OF PENTECOST.

MY BRETHREN, we are assembled to celebrate the birth-day feast of revelation--the anniversary of an event which can never perish from the memory of man, while God's name continues to be heard on earth. Three thousand years ago, on this auspicious morning the myriads of Israel were seen round the barriers which girt the base of Sinai. Their eyes were upturned towards the cime which supernal radiance encircled like a crown of glory; and with beating hearts and exalted spirits, they listened to the voice divine, which spake the precepts of life. Those precepts, brethren, with their detail of doctrines and duties, statutes and judgments, form the Law of Moses, the which I present before you in the words of the inspired lawgiver himself, pronounced ere he departed to eternal rest. They are found Deut. xxxiii. 4, תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב, "The law which Moses commanded us is the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob."

On the testimony of the text, my brethren, this sacred day has given us a birthright, in the law to

which it gave origin. Revealed to us by the Eternal, bequeathed to us by the dying words of His prophet, and confided to us by the voice of priest, seer and sage, we owe certain duties to this our sacred inheritance. They are—

- I. TO OBSERVE IT WITH ALL OUR HEART.
- II. TO PRESERVE IT WITH ALL OUR SOUL.
- III. TO DEFEND IT WITH ALL OUR MIGHT.

In developing these points, we will endeavour to illustrate the precepts we would inculcate, by the example of our ancestors, a course which, while exhibiting our own degeneracy, can hardly fail to indicate the path which befits us in the future.

In the first place, then, “we are to observe our inheritance with all our heart.” To it should be directed the strongest and most tender emotions of which we are capable, that they may attach us to its observance in every condition of our lives. We should feel a fervent love for its doctrines—we should have a profound veneration for its ordinances—we should be penetrated with a deep gratitude for its sanctions. All these our fathers felt. Their love and reverence and gratitude may be traced on every page of their history. If we unclasp the volume of their annals, we shall read of zeal and devotion which placed every other consideration beneath the sacred aim of preserving their inheritance;—we shall discover piety and virtue which attributed every earthly good to an appreciation of that inheritance:—we shall trace resignation which bowed before all earthly trials, in order that such humiliation might shield the blessed possession. But if we compare the past with the

present,—our fathers' love for it, with our own indifference, we must be fearfully struck with the contrast presented; for we shall see the age of darkness producing religious fervour, while the era of enlightenment is giving birth to sinful apathy. And wherefore is this, my brethren? Does the law of Moses, like mankind in life, lose vigor and effect according as it advances in years? Does the law of Moses fail to day in what it was designed to do thirty centuries since? Does the law of Moses claim from its inheritors, who have been civilised by its own light and truth, less devotion than it claimed from those who received it, when they had been brutalised by the oppression of Egypt? No, brethren, it is because we have changed, not in intellect, but in feeling—not in the mind, but in the heart. An enlightened age has given us new wants and made desire stronger; and we have not the moral courage to resist its influence. Our fathers were content with little, if that little could be blessed with God's fervour; *we* grasp at all, and insatiately wish for more, the more we acquire. Hence it is that violated justice—outraged integrity—desecrated Sabbaths and neglected observances—mark our progress through life—a progress in which interest, instead of virtue is the goal, and earthly aggrandizement the prize, instead of heavenly life. All this shews that we have no real love for our ancient heritage—that we are false to the covenant which thirty ages have consecrated—that the law of God possesses not our hearts.

II.

But, brethren, it may be said, that if our hearts fail in duty, our souls are cognizant of the claims of our inheritance. Methinks I hear you exclaim, that though we may neglect observances, we yet cherish doctrines, and strive to implant them in our children, as a sure means of preserving them. Do we not prove our anxiety thus to preserve them, say you, by promoting the cause of education? Do we not build schools, ask you, and support synagogues? Do we not give our children knowledge, and inculcate religion? Even so, my brethren, all these you do: but all these do not go far to prove that you are anxious to preserve your inheritance. Your fathers did no more than these, and yet they effected more towards maintaining the law of God than you do, with all your vaunted deeds. They did not erect stately edifices for learning, with lofty turrets or graceful columns of architectural faultlessness. The constructions they sought to make were in the hearts of their children;—the beauties they sought to develop, were in the souls of a rising generation. For these labours, they found a sphere in the sanctuary of their homes;—around the domestic hearth the scene of their religious operations lay. They watched the dawning of infantile intelligence, and as a ray of the illumining spirit came to view, they made it shine upon God's Word. Their religious teachings were not what you give your children: a superficial knowledge of the holy tongue, and a bible to read, without a word of exposition. No, every morning's sun called them to lead their children unto God; Sabbath rest and feast-

day joys, ritual solemnities and synagogue observances, were all impressed in the holy work of instructing the young. But you, brethren, how do *you* acquit yourselves of this truly Judaic duty? how do you strive to preserve the law through your children? Hearken and blush for your inconsistency. You build schools, and send not your children thither. You establish institutes of learning, which you dare entitle national, and you send your charges to Gentiles to be taught. If the preacher tells you that you thus imperil their souls—that by bringing them near to pollution, you must pollute them—that by exposing them to temptation, you send them to certain ruin, you laugh derisively, and with bright visions of your sons' scholastic success in the future, you call the preacher's fears imaginary—his warnings needless. Hearken, then, brethren, while to your distempered vision I expose a picture of reality, a picture which must fill your hearts with horror, if you can feel as Jewish parents ought to feel. A daughter of your people was placed in a local school, charged only to receive the secular knowledge which was therein taught. Her parents were not blind to the danger which impended. She received paternal warnings and monitions against imbibing aught of the religious teaching which ordinarily is dispensed in such establishments. Nature having formed her maiden heart impressible to the sweet emotions of religion, her Gentile teacher, false to duty and honour, conceived the fell design of seducing that girl from her parent faith. Slowly and insidiously the dangerous seed was planted. The child was told to look among

her people if aught of true piety were there recognisable—if devotion were to be seen in their worship,—purity in their observances. She looked around her—saw much of form and ceremony; but it is a reproach to us, my brethren, that she saw no spirituality—no godliness. From this view, her sensitive mind was called to gaze upon the worship of the Gentiles—to see humility and devotion prostrate before a mistaken belief. Then was she told that the difference arose in Judaism having nought spiritual in its elements,—in Christianity being the only saving faith, which suited the attributes of our immortal nature. Is it to be wondered that the insidious teachings of this pseudo friend, aided by our own indevotion led that child into error? She remembered the doctrines of her faith, and vainly adduced them to disarm the tempter's wiles. She spoke of God's choice of Israel and its prerogative—of our exalted destinies and its glories. But all her arguments, arguments feeble from want of knowledge, were artfully countervailed by a cant which is most powerful over romantic natures—a cant which sacrilegiously perverts the meaning of our own Scriptures, to mislead innocence.

As a consequence, the girl fell—not fatally—not consummately—but fell in thought and belief. And when the sacred Passover approached, and summoned her parents to festal joy and happiness, that joy was blasted, that happiness marred, by the announcement so horrifying to a faithful parent's ears, that their darling child was a Christian, and looked for salvation to another than the God of Israel. Dear friends, have

you hearts to feel for such paternal woe? And are not your souls harrowed by the fear lest *your* children be so near destruction? Brethren, God's mercy reached those distracted parents. It was not quite too late, and, with Heaven's help, the evil seed was eradicated, and the disgrace averted. But still it is a solemn warning to you, apathetic parents. It is a warning to you, that the patronage of Gentile schools is irreconcilable with a regard for your inheritance, the law of Moses. It is a warning to you, that while your children, if properly reared, will succeed you as conservators of Torath Moshé, their religious neglect, or their consignment to unholy training, will make them faithless to God, and recreant to the compact of Sinai; and the fearful consequences of thus despising your inheritance, will be seen in your own broken hearts—your own grey hairs brought down to the grave in shame and sorrow.

III.

We come now to observe, my brethren, that it is thirdly our duty "to defend our inheritance with all our might."

Do you require that I should remind you of the heroism with which our fathers performed that duty? Shall I place before you the picture of bigotry, with a sword of wrath, massacring whole communities, and deluging the land with blood, because Jacob clung to his inheritance? Shall I call to your recollection myriads of faithful Israelites, driven from home and possessions, and sent forth beggars among strangers, only for loving that inheritance? Shall I revert your

memories to days not far remote, when in civilised communities, we were despoiled, robbed, openly outraged, and trampled on, for our devotion to that inheritance? Or, shall I depict the blazing stake, the hideous *auto da fé*, where fanaticism durst invoke God's blessing on the cruel murder of the people who only clung to their inheritance? No, brethren, this retrospect is unnecessary to convince you of the devotion with which our fathers sacrificed to their divine treasure, their lives and possessions. They parted cheerfully with wealth, if it could only purchase them the privilege of peacefully enjoying the study of their law; and when that failed them, they went forth to die, martyrs,—glorious martyrs to their attachment for their heritage, saying, as David said of old, *כל זאת באתנו ולא שכחנו ולא שקרנו בבריתך* “All this has come upon us, yet have we not forgotten Thee, nor have we been false to Thy covenant.”

From these reflections, brethren, let us turn to enquire what we must do to protect our sacred possession. In this age, and especially in this happy country, we have no occasion to immolate to it, either our lives or fortune. Wise laws defend it, perfect liberty protects it: all that devolves upon us in this respect is to promote its study by those who devote to it their whole hearts and minds. Brethren, you know that in these days, students of divine truth pursue their sacred occupation almost in penury. They labour not in active walks of life, but at early morn and late at night, they pore over the volume of sacred lore, and find in it their only joys. Does it not become us, then, to keep care from them, by providing them

with the crust of bread and flask of water, which is all they ask in their chosen labour of love and duty? Does it not become us to aid, as far as we are able, the maintenance of those remnants of our ancient schools, by keeping these professors from beggary and want? Aye, my friends, and it is to our credit that we recognise the duty, and strive with cheerfulness to perform it. But that our general efforts are not sufficient for the sacred purpose,—that more extended and more efficient means are necessary, we have been recently convinced; for now that the conflict of nations causes all to be engrossed with domestic wants and sufferings,—now that established resources fail, and established contributions are perforce withheld, we hear of misery, famine, and death, among the poor students of God's law. You know, brethren, that thousands of our co-religionists, with the sacred fire of natural love, have abandoned the comforts and security which civilization sheds, to approach the hallowed regions of God's once-favoured land, that they may study the law in its birthplace, and yield up their last breath in the sight of Zion's hill. You know, too, that while the restricted liberties of pachalic policy offer no protection for property acquired, they can cultivate no certain source of sustenance for themselves. To the law and to the testimony they devote their days, and for the crust wherewith to support life, they repose on the charity of their brethren. At this period, that charity is restricted, that source of help shortened; and, while the failing harvest has made the staff of life increase in value, they have seen their means of procuring it, failing

daily. What has been the result? Suffering, starvation, death. "Want and pestilence walk hand in hand among them, and the wail of the poor, the widow and the orphan, is borne on the air. Fathers sell their children for food, and innocent babes are perishing for want, on the laps of distracted mothers. Those who formerly delighted in charity, now seek an alms themselves, and, vainly calling aloud for bread, they perish famine-stricken. All classes, grades and conditions are united in the brotherhood of woe; learned rabbis and their disciples, temple ministrants and their flock, all mix in the crowd of sufferers who supplicate a mouldy crust."*

Brethren, can you hear of such horrors, at any time, without feeling pity and compassion. But on this day—the day which gave you the law for your inheritance, can ye listen to the call of its students, perishing of hunger and disease, and not hasten your gifts to give them life and healing? Surely not, my friends. You have feeling hearts and responsive spirits; and I therefore summon you, this day, to the succour of brethren bound to you by every tie of duty and religion.

Do you value your inheritance? Then arise in your charity, sons of Jacob. Open your hearts and give of your goods, to relieve your starving brethren. Remember, that however small your mite, you may yet save a life; you may preserve a father to his offspring,—give a mother to her helpless babe. Your ancestors were never deaf to the cry of distress, but,

* Letters from the Holy Land, published by the Rev. Dr. Adler and Sir Moses Montefiore.

for the sake of their inheritance, they clothed the naked, fed the hungry, and refreshed the weary. Nor must *you* suffer brethren to perish for food, while food is within your grasp; but, responsive to the calls of religion, charity and humanity, you must give—give with open hand and open heart.

Do you value your inheritance? Then from the call of your starving co-religionists, you must turn to the call of your religion;—from the famine of Jerusalem, you must glance at the famine in your own community; *לא רעב ללחם ולא צמא למים כי אם לשמוע את דברי ה'* “Not a famine of bread nor a drought of water, but a failure of obedience to the words of the Eternal.” You must arouse yourself to a sense of the obligations which your fathers took for you on this great day,—an obligation which has survived three thousand years, and will survive to the end of time. You have heard to day rehearsed, the precepts which they received from God, amid the glories of Sinai. Remember them, to reverence and to practise them. Remember, that the Eternal, who brought you forth from Egypt, is to be your *only* God,—that gods of gold and silver must not share in your devotions, to rob Him of His honour. Remember that His name is sacred, and can be profaned in your mouths, but at the peril of your souls. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy, so that you desecrate it not with the acts or thoughts of labour, nor try to delude God, as you delude man, by secretly attending to the calls of your vocation. Remember to revere and honour the paternal rule, that a father’s or a mother’s accusation convict you not before Heaven of filial rebellion.

Remember to respect the life, the honour, the property, and the character of your neighbour, and never, through unruly desire, cast a longing eye upon the treasures of your brother man.

Finally. Do you value your inheritance? Then, while observant of the precepts given at Horeb, be heedful to transmit them to your successors, **ושננתם לבניך** “by inserting them like arrows,” in their hearts, so that, once admitted, they cannot be eradicated. Be careful that no defiling teaching gains admission to them,—that pernicious doctrine and pernicious example be kept far from them,—and that they are not confided to the care of those who think it a virtue, to seduce them from their inheritance. And if no other fears can have force with you, shudder at the misery you are providing for yourselves—at the fate you are providing for them, when you lead them to be faithless to the law which Moses commanded as **מורשה קהלת יעקב** “the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.”

PRAYER.

Sovereign of the Universe, Almighty Guardian of Israel! we are before Thee, to celebrate once more the birth-day feast of revelation; and, as our minds revert to the auspicious hour when, from the heights of Horeb, there beamed the everlasting light, we bend the knee in gratitude before Thy throne, and chant a pious Hallelujah to Thy name. O God! manifold are the blessings which Thou hast heaped upon Thy people; but none can rank with the glorious boon con-

ferred on the memorable day, whose anniversary we are here to solemnise—the boon of Thy eternal and unchanging law. O, make us worthy of this treasure, and of the privileges which its possession confers upon us; so that we may love it with the devoted affection our fathers felt for it. They, Lord, clung to it through a thousand changes of condition. In the dark night of persecution they clasped it to their bosom; in every gleam of happy sunshine, they cherished it as their dearest treasure. They defended it from every attack, and vindicated its truth wherever their weary feet conducted them. Then inspire Thou, our hearts with the same sentiments of love for Thy gift, gratitude for Thy goodness, devotion to Thy service, which swayed our ancestors. Teach us to value our inheritance while we live; and, when we die, to transmit unto our children as a precious and imperishable legacy. And, in all our conduct, let its sacred influence be apparent in the three phases of our religious duty,—obedience to Thee, instruction to our children, and charity to our brethren. May these be included in our festal vow, and may their performance be our constant care, so that we may be deserving of Thy love, Thy providence, and Thy favour. Amen.

XI.

THE SORROWS AND CONSOLATION OF
JERUSALEM.

A SERMON FOR שבת נחמו

נחמו נחמו עמי יאמר אלהיכם

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.—*Isaiah* xl. 1.

BRETHREN,—It is to-day the sabbath of consolation—the hallowed day when we are wont to review the days of mourning just concluded,—to turn from the dark retrospect of Israel's sufferings and afflictions, and to gaze with hope and joy on the bright and cheering prospects of Israel's future. In obedience to the prophet's words, we are to speak comfort to the heart of Jerusalem and bid her forget her sorrows in her hope of restoration. But, my brethren, even as it is necessary for the physician, ere he applies himself to cure the ills of our flesh, to ascertain the precise nature of the ailment, determining its extent by the symptoms; so is it necessary for us to enquire into the nature and extent of that affliction, to which the prophet bids us administer comfort. In order then,

that our consoling efforts may have a salutary peace-diffusing influence, we will proceed to consider :

I.—THE AFFLICTION OF ISRAEL.

II.—THE CAUSE OF THAT AFFLICTION; AND

III.—THE PROMISED COMFORT.

I.

The affliction of Israel is the destruction of kingdom, home and altars—the demolition of national glories never since equalled in the world. To realize a just idea of our woe, we must glance at the splendors of the past,—we must revert to those halcyon days when Israel lived happy and prosperous, governed by a Heaven-appointed monarchy, subject to a Heaven-born constitution. We then behold Jerusalem in all the fulness of her glory. Around her sacred altars we see the ministering priests arrayed—the Levitic choir ranged along her aisles, while myriads of grateful children prostrate in her courts, proclaim the holy nature of that dominion of which God is the acknowledged Head. Then, having gazed upon the early greatness of our people and contemplated the power of their monarchy—the glory of their religion;—having thus seen Jerusalem hallowed by her God-inhabited temple, whither worshipping thousands are pouring in from every village and hamlet of Palestine,—proceed we downwards on the course of time to behold the Holy City surrounded by the besieging armies of Nebuchadnezzar, its defences yielding daily, its resources diminishing hourly. Without, there are the warriors of Babylon, like hungry lions, watching their certain prey;—within, there are suffering, famine

and death, assembled in fearful union as heralds of defeat and woe. Anon, there is desolation: the devoted city is a waste **מבלי יושב** "without an inhabitant." Where now is the teeming population of what was once **קריה נאמנה**, the faithful city? Where are the youths of Israel—the mighty warriors of Jerusalem, who fought of old the battles of the Lord? Zion is desolate, because the flower of her children are slain—the remnant gone into captivity; while the captors mock their sorrows, and, heartless and unfeeling, bid the exiles sing the songs of home.—But again we will turn, my brethren, from the scene of misery and desolation, and proceed yet downward through years of tribulation, until we approach the end of the Babylonian captivity! We now see the exiles on their return to their land, rebuilding prostrate Jerusalem. With the spade in one hand and the sword in the other—from labour to the conflict—they hasten at every warning, cheerfully combating every difficulty until the grand result is achieved. The temple once more lifts its stately head on high, and the Jewish empire is restored. But, alas! my brethren, this brightness is ephemeral. Prosperity begets its common consequences; internal warfare and disunion convulse the land, and crime takes up its abode in the priestly city. At last, as the result of intestine contest for supremacy, we see Judea under the yoke of Rome, a yoke whose severity continues to gall the self-enslaved people, until infuriated by the tyranny and oppression of the procurator Florus, they take up arms and drive the Romans from Jerusalem. Now commences that fearful struggle whose issue is so pregnant with evil for Jacob's race

and land. The people, flushed with their victory over Cestius, dream no more of subjection beneath a hated yoke, but deem themselves able to contend successfully against the giant hosts of Rome. And nobly they do contend, in spite of every disadvantage. Against the greatest warriors of the age they are in arms; but undisciplined though they be, their hearts burn with an ardor for the cause of liberty, which renders every man a legion in himself. Yet is their heroism unavailing. Internal dissension weakens them daily more and more, while slowly but surely the invaders onward press, until once more Jerusalem is besieged. Around her walls are marshalled mighty legions with all the engines of war, burning for vengeance; while within her gates, her children are suffering miseries unparalleled in the history of the world. Her streets are strewn with dead, for famine stalks in her midst and lays her defenders low by thousands. They cry aloud for food: they slay each other in contest for a morsel, and pray for death to terminate their agonies. Mothers slay their children, and, nature dead within them, they feast upon the flesh. Meanwhile, the conflict rages fiercely, and nearer approach the invader's hosts. Titus enters the city, and yet the people struggle with superhuman energy, defending step by step, their homes and altars. Rivers of blood course along the streets;—the avenues are strewn with the dead and the dying, and still the din of battle is heard,—the people yield not. But now, the fatal ninth of Ab recurs,—that day, already dark with the memory of Babylon's conquest; and on that morn, despair is spread into the heart of Jerusalem, not by

the success of her assailants, for that she is prepared to bear heroically, but by the sight of her temple in flames. All now is consternation. The shouts of barbaric triumph mingle with the roar of the conflagration;—the shrieks of the old and defenceless as they are stricken down pitilessly, and the groans of the patriots as they cast their dying glance at the burning sanctuary, all unite to swell the horrors of that day of misery, when Jerusalem suffered for her sins and saw her children go forth to captivity. Nearly eighteen hundred years have elapsed, my brethren, since the period to which we have reverted; and through all these weary centuries, we can describe the history of our people in the words, sorrow and suffering, woe and tribulation. From clime to clime we have been driven, never finding rest for the soles of our feet. In every age persecuted,—in every land despised, we have lived on, in spite of all the ills that have attended us, sustained by one hope, the hope of future restoration. This hope was in our hearts, as the blade of oppression thrust its way through it;—it was before our eyes amid the burning brands of the stake which bigotry kindled for us: neither the fire nor the sword could surpress it. We suffered all patiently, assured that our present sorrows would yet be forgotten, in the glories of that future promised by Divine love and mercy, when Zion should see her paths restored and her children ransomed. But to approximate that epoch, my brethren, we must direct our thoughts to the lessons taught by our captive state, and discover, that we may avoid, what forms our second head,—

II.

The cause of Israel's affliction.

What is it, my brethren, that lost for us sanctuary, country and national existence? Alas! the causes of our dispersion were manifold, and we must seek them in the page of prophecy or the teachings of learned men. First stands forth the testimony of Zechariah, **ולבם שמו שמיר משמוע את התורה** "They made their hearts like adamant, lest they should hearken to the law." They were deaf to the voice of instruction; they avoided all opportunity of hearing the sublime teachings of God's word; and, as a natural consequence, were heedless of the duties of public worship. Now, brethren, the neglect of public worship is the certain parent of crime. Wrapped in the busy whirl of secular life, our highest virtues are imperilled, our most sacred emotions deteriorated, unless they can be nurtured by the hallowing influence of public devotion. You can therefore well comprehend, that a disregard of this great moral agent, should have gradually undermined the religious spirit of the nation, until at last it reached the climax recorded by Jeremiah **כחשו בה' ויאמרו לא הוא** "they denied the Eternal, and said he exists not."

Thus they became infidel—lost their virtue and religion—and came to look down from the God of Heaven, to seek a deity of wood or stone, senseless as themselves, repulsive as their own depraved souls. So much, my brethren, for the first temple—for the iniquity which was visited by Babylon; and led us captives to Chaldea. Descending to the second

temple, we find that absolute idolatry formed no part of Israel's backslidings. Infidelity, the adoption of heathenish philosophy, was unquestionably a prominent feature. Still that rejected not the worship of God. He was generally recognised in all their theories as the Great First Cause, although that recognition was sullied by their details of belief. We must therefore seek further for the cause. In the Gemara of Yona, where the question is put—**מקדש שני שאנו בקיין בו שהיו עוסקים בתורה ובמצוה ובמעשים טובים** : **מפני מה חרב :** "The second temple, in which were practised the law, the commandments, and good works. Wherefore was that destroyed?" **מפני שנתת חנם שהיתה ביניהם** "Because of the rancour with which men pursued each other." Rancour, tintured by jealousy and envy, is the sure precursor of violence and iniquity, sufficient to overthrow any state, by entailing that awful train of horrifying crimes which made our sages thus describe it—**ששקולה שנאת הנם כנגד שלש עבירות עבודה זרה גלוי עריות ושפיכות דם** as being equal to the three greatest sins—idolatry, incest, and murder.

In the treatise of "Shabbath," the cause of the desolation described, is pronounced to have been **מפני שלא היה להם בשת פנים זה מזה** "that no one felt ashamed of his acts before his neighbour, so general had crime become." What an awful state of society must that have been, my brethren, where the only link of confraternity was the community of vice,—where there was no denunciation of evil, and violence needed never to hide its head, but paraded abroad its unholy spirit, without

the fear of infamy or reproach. Yet to this, Rabbi Isaac adds a cause, which completes the idea of general depravity, by the testimony *שהשוו בה קטן וגדול* "that the great and lowly were on a level. This universal equality, my brethren, which figures in the dreamings of the visionary, can never exist to the safety of society. Unrestrained by authority, men *must* become lawless and unprincipled; without subordination, might *will* triumph over right in the most moral community. How, then, must it have been, where the *will* was the only governing principle—where neither the fear of punishment, nor the fear of shame had influence over a depraved population—where, as Rabbi Hanina further declares *שלא הוכיחו זה לזה* that no man could reprove his neighbour. Well, then, may we believe that the nation had reached that point when the land was ready to eject them; when, as we have seen, all regard to religion and morality was lost—when vice was triumphant, and anarchy rife—so that, in the once holy metropolis, the once holy people so contemned the law of God as to call down destruction on their altars, desolation on their land, captivity on their children.

Thus briefly, my brethren, we have traced the cause of our present condition, and we have found it in the conjoint influence of infidelity and idolatry, hatred and malice, shameless violence and rebellious vice. It will be logically evident to you, that even as these crimes led to our captivity, so will their continuance prevent our restoration. It is the opinion expressed in the Talmud, treatise Sanhedrin, that it is futile to search out any exact period for our restoration

אין הדבר תלוייה אלא בתשובה ובמעשים טובים "the event is dependent upon our repentance and virtuous actions." Therefore, my brethren, if we cling to the hope of seeing our empire once more established, we must eschew those vices which have twice before destroyed it. We must pull down our idols, and banish our free-thinking infidelity. We must no longer worship other than the God of Heaven, and to Him must we offer a service that is worthy of His exalted character. But you will exclaim: surely there is no idolatry now in Israel—our people are free from that debasing sin. Alas! my brethren, every man erects an idol of his own, and falls before it in adoration. One worships gold, and to it he sacrifices his spiritual welfare. To him, no Sabbath bids the weekly rest approach—no festive days bring joy and happiness. Lucre is his god, and it rules a loyal subject. Another is a sensualist,—he worships unholy pleasure. His appetite is his criterion, and he laughs at all religious restraint. A third is the votary of fashion: what the world approves, he approves. No scruples of conscience prevent his rising in the estimation of his divinity; but religion and parentage are all sacrificed to win him a single smile from the world he so much loves. Aye, my brethren: false gods are not only of wood and stone; there are other idols, whose worship imperils our souls, and, ere we may hope for restoration, we must pull them down and give undivided worship to Him in whom we rest our trust,—to the God of Israel. And that worship we must render worthy of its recipient; it must be pure and holy, an acceptable sacrifice, and an incense of devotion, from

the altar of our heart. In our moral conduct, we must correct each tendency to error;—we must root out the spirit of rancour and animosity, disunion and hatred, and cherish the kindly feelings of love and brotherhood. We must value subordination and the wholesome classification of ranks, as inseparable from social welfare; and then shall we be prepared for this hoped-for redemption—then shall we be worthy to witness the fulfilment of what God has promised, and what our fathers have prayed and hoped for these thousand years. What that promise is, my brethren, we have now to consider as our third head.

III.

What is the promised comfort of Jerusalem ?

It is the re-establishment of home and altar—the restoration of what we hold most dear. To conceive the fulness of that blessed event, you must picture in your minds all its glories from its dawn to its meridian. You must imagine the shrill blast of the great Shofar which is to summon the captives from every clime—the dispersed ones from the corners of the earth. Hark at the tramp of the ransomed millions hastening to their regenerated courts! See men of every land—of every rank—of every tongue, pressing onward with one aim;—all looking to one goal, the banner that is set up to collect our captives, in their own possessions. Then contemplate the re-established government. Behold a kingdom of peace, where strife and warfare, with its attendant vices, are unknown; where only love and brotherhood will obtain, and all will be linked in the great tie of virtuous confraternity. Dwell,

next, on the wide extended empire of Israel and Judah, now conjoined; see its peaceful banner waving over wide realms, all smiling with fertility—lofty hills clad with the luxuriant produce of the east and of the west, of the icy north and of the sunny south. See, instead of warriors marshalled for the field—armies of husbandmen; swords converted into ploughshares—spears into pruning hooks, and all men's energies used to bless and aid their kind, by the arts of peace and usefulness. And more than all, my brethren, think of the whole world becoming one vast sanctuary, where God's true name and attributes will be proclaimed,—where one universal faith shall link the family of man, and all pay reverence to that Law, the depositaries of which, it has been our glory, to be. Think of no more vice and impurity,—the defilements of our past lives forgotten—the taint of sin and evil unknown; so that **נמר-עם גרי ירבין** the wolf of rapacity shall dwell with the lamb of innocence, **ועגל וכפיר ומריא יחדיו** the leopard of wild and violent impulse lie down with the helplessness of the kid and the calf, the young lion and the fatling, though of adverse nature and instincts, shall be together **ונער קמן נהג בם** while the child of moral authority shall hold the leading reins. **לא ירעו ולא ישחיתו בכל הר קדשי**—There shall be no evil, or corruption in all my holy mount; **כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים** because the world will be as full of knowledge as the waters cover the sea. This, my brethren, is the future that lies before us—the future for which we daily pray and which is our heart's best hope. But what certainty have we that the fulfilment is to come? What is the

source of our confidence? First, the unchanging and all competent word of God; and secondly, the annals of the past. Compare we history with prophecy—the event with the prediction and against all human probabilities, our hearts must hope.

Then let us hope on, brethren, let us hope on to the end, and let our trust remain unshaken. Let us render ourselves worthy of the vast revolution that is to be wrought in our favor; and soon, full soon, the great and glorious day will dawn which is to give to Israel the sovereignty of the world; the day which will witness once again the smoke of incense mounting to the sky, and see the holocausts of gratitude and love offered on the altars of Jerusalem, because צִיּוֹן בַּמִּשְׁפָּט תִּפְדֶּה וְשִׁבְיָהּ בַּצָּרָה “Zion will be redeemed with judgment and her captives with righteousness.”

“Yes, Salem, thou shalt rise; thy Father's aid

* Will heal the wound His chastening hand hath made;
Shall judge the proud oppressor's ruthless sway,
And burst the brazen bonds and cast their cords away.”

PRAYER.

SOVEREIGN of the universe! on this the comforting period of Thy people's celebrations, we are here to draw from Thee, the sweet consoling draught of hope. We have, to-day, reverted to the dark path of our national afflictions; and we have looked forward to the bright future of national restoration. Grant, Father, that the lessons of the one may lead us to deserve the bliss of the other;—that, having discovered the crimes which made Zion a desolation, we may

regard them as the quicksands which beset our future path, and strive to exterminate from among us, every tendency to approach them. We pray Thee, Father, to make us worthy of Thy promised redemption. We pray Thee to make for us the highway through the desert of our captivity, that thereon we may march forward to national independence. Thus, prove Thou to the world, that while all flesh is grass that fadeth, and all its glory, the blossom of the field that withereth, Thy word, which endures for ever, has preserved us through the wreck of ages, and canst make our end eclipse a thousandfold the glory of our beginning. To this end, Lord, we supplicate Thee, even as every day Thy people supplicate,—

חקע בשופר גדול לחרותינו ושא נם לקבץ גליותינו וקבצנו
יחד מארבע כנפות הארץ :

“Blow the great trumpet for our redemption, and lift up the banner to collect our dispersed ones, and gather us all together from the four corners of the earth.” Amen.

NOTE.—The Author desires here to acknowledge his obligation to the Rev. D. A. De Sola, to whose research he is mainly indebted for the compilation of the several causes to which the Talmud attributes the dispersion. See Sermon delivered at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue נחמו שבת 5593.

XII.

PRAYER, ITS SPHERE AND ITS
CHARACTER.

WE have again entered upon the month of propitiation,—the period at which we are all required to occupy ourselves with the work of spiritual preparation against the great and awful day of expiation. We are launched upon those forty days of warning, when festal anticipations are mingled with solemn reflections; and while the heart, exulting in the approach of our sweetest solemnities, throbs with grateful hopes and aspirations, the soul also, feels itself roused to a sense of its responsibility, to a recognition of the cares and duties which belong to this season. Now it is, that we begin to restrain our footsteps from the wonted path,—now that our tongues are curbed by sacred contemplation, and our thoughts and desires checked by chastening reflection. Now, too, we begin to extend our charities, to widen the portals of our hearts, to feel more tenderly, more intimately the woes of our fellows, to participate more feelingly in their sorrows, and to seek the way, by which those woes and sorrows can be alleviated. But while repentance is thus designated by our spiritual efforts, and while charity is indicated by our spiritual movements, there is another consideration which belongs to the season—another Heaven-seeking exercise—another powerful advocate

at this period of grace, upon which we shall have most to rely, and which we are too wont to depreciate in effect. I refer, my brethren, to prayer, whose sphere and character we shall to-day consider, basing our reflections upon Eccl. iv. 17.

שמר רגליך כאשר תלך אל בית האלהים וקרוב לשמע
מתת הנסילים זבה כי אינם יודעים לעשת רע:

“Keep thy foot, when thou goest to the house of God, and draw near to hear rather than give the sacrifice of fools, for they know not that they do evil.”

In illustrating this text, it will be necessary to enquire into the meaning of the four expressions, employed by the wise king.

- I.—בית אלהים THE HOUSE OF GOD.
- II.—שמור רגליך KEEP THY FEET.
- III.—וקרוב לשמוע DRAW NEAR TO HEAR.
- IV.—תת הנסילים זבה GIVING THE SACRIFICE OF FOOLS.

I.

Where, brethren, is the house of God? Where the habitation of His glory? והאריך השמים כסאי והארץ הדרום רגלי אי זה בית אשר תבנו לי ואי זה מקום מנוחתי “Behold, the Eternal hath said, the Heaven is My throne, and the earth My footstool, where is the house which you can build for Me, where the place for Me to rest?” Is there any locality where we must look to find Him especially, that Solomon should speak of the house of God? We are in the open field, under the wide arch of Heaven, with all His majestic works illumining the sphere; and gazing with myriad eyes upon the lonely face of earth, we are praying there—can it be said that God is not nigh, because 'tis not

His house? In the dark prison-cell, where granite walls and massive bolts and bars immure some felon's form, whose heavy chains clang as he falls upon his knees to pray with tearful eyes and penitent heart; shall we say, that God is not there—it is not His dwelling-place? In the narrow cabin of some roaming bark which is being tossed upon the vast expanse of water, now lashed into fury by the tempest, the storm-driven mariner is prostrate in prayer for God's help and protection. Shall we tell him, that he prays in vain, since that is not God's house? Or shall we discourage the humble peasant, who, ere he seeks his nightly pallet, pours forth his orisons in gratitude for past and supplication for future mercies? Shall we, or dare we tell him that God is not there? No, my brethren, God's abode is, like His goodness, universal. Wherever we turn our eyes, or bid our thoughts fly onwards, there is His presence, ever propitious, ever welcoming those who seek Him as He should be sought. Then why assign to Him a house? Why limit His glory to walls of human structure? Because, although He may be approached always, He may not be approached indifferently. Our footsteps must be regulated for the interview—we must be attuned to the solemnity of the occasion. Prayer is the communion of the spirit in man with the parent spirit at the fountain head of purity. In that exercise, the Divine essence which is within us, soars upwards to communicate its wants, its thoughts, its hopes, its aspirings to an indulgent parent, that they may all be satisfied. And in what state we may materially be placed, is unimportant; whether in the spacious aisles of a

temple, or in the silent recess of our chamber—in the open field, or in the stately palace,—the soul's devotion will be equally efficacious, provided they preserve their spiritual character. But we all have not especial impulses to seek the throne of grace, and if we waited until such promptings should grow within us, we should become engrossed with the cares of the world and either never think of God at all, or we should serve Him unworthily in the midst of our domestic cares and secular duties. Hence arises the necessity for public worship, a solemnity which assembles all ranks and classes for the sacred purposes of devotion, that the contagion of sanctity may fly from one another, and the smallest spark of piety be kindled into a pure and holy flame. And as every thought and word originated by this sacred place should possess a spiritual nature akin to the Being with whom we seek converse,—as herein is forbidden every unholy desire or sentiment, and as nought should here be seen but humbled heads,—nought be heard but humble accents, our tribute to our Maker,—it follows as a consequence, that this should be called the house of God. Not, indeed, a dwelling-place, but a place consecrated to His service and honor—a place where, as He says: אֲשֶׁר אֶזְכֹּר אֶת שְׁמִי אָבָא אֵלֶיךָ וּבִרְכָתִיךָ "I will cause My name to be remembered and I will come to you and bless you." Thus then, brethren, although from the depth of our affliction, we can pray to God in our chambers and feel the conviction that our prayer is acceptable, we dare not systematically depreciate the temple service, and neglect it with the erroneous notion that we can pray as well at home. No. This

is the altar built for our worship, and here must we pour out our soul's devotions, when blessed with the strength to seek it. Private mercies may be sought and private ills deprecated in the stillness of the closet; but when Sabbath hours and festal commemoration summon us, it is hither we must come with our praises and prayers, in the spirit of the Rabbi who taught אין תפלה של אדם נשמעת אלא בבית הכנסת "Man's prayers—that is, his stated orisons—are only heard in the synagogue."

II.

The preacher directs us, in the text, "to keep our feet when we go to the house of God," by which he inculcates the doctrine, that the motives which should direct us to the sanctuary, should be wholly pure and worthy. It would be a self-delusion, brethren, were we to imagine that every visitant at this holy fane, is brought hither by religious prompting. Alas! there are many worldly motives which share our duty, many unworthy objects hidden under our pious demeanour. One comes hither to win a character for religious fervour, and contents himself with standing in the presence of his God, a mere voluble and mechanical worshipper. Another comes because it looks well. Fashion decrees, by the visits of the greatest among you, that God does deserve some share of your time, and you accordingly do come to give Him, not your praises, but a portion of your leisure. Others would seek an opportunity to display some new appointments, some novel ornate dress, or jewel; and lo! these come to worship themselves and their finery in

the temple of their God ; while many others would profit by the smiling sunbeams and the balmy winds of summer, to meet friends assembled altogether, that they may interchange a greeting. Are these motives laudable, brethren? Are such impulses worthy of us and of our Maker? Surely not; and therefore have Solomon's words much force and meaning for us, when they bid us take heed of our footsteps as we hither come. It must not be hypocrisy, or fashion, or vanity that impels our progress, but a pure and holy motive,—a recognition of our position before Heaven, as children before a parent—as servants before a master. In fine, brethren, there must be a preparation of our minds, before we seek these precincts. The inscription written above this holy place must not only arrest our gaze, but must also grasp our intellect and engross our soul, so that, bodily and spiritually we may be holy, and every rising thought whisper anew דע לפני מי אתה עומד “Know before whom thou standest.” When the disorderly movements of some tardy worshipper, entering near the close of the solemnity, distracts our attention, and fills our mind with some sharp, reproachful sentiment against his laxity, we must repress that sentiment, in honour of the place, and let charity teach us to “know before whom we stand.” So, when irreverent neighbours seek to degrade these holy precincts by introducing hither the piquant jest or biting sarcasm, the indecorous whisper or trifling smile, we must reprove the sacrilege by letting our devotion teach them to “know before whom they stand.” Thus, must every irregularity in ourselves, or in others, be controlled and

bridled into reverent subjection. When we approach the throne of earthly majesty, and are honoured by the countenance of human loyalty, what is our demeanour? We feel no awe for the kingly personage. Our lives, our fortunes, are not in his grasp, and yet conventionalism bows the knee and constrains a decorous demeanour, free from levity or mirth. Here the incentive is the higher, for our position in this place is *כעבד לפני אדוניו* "as a slave in the presence of his lord," of the lord who sways his destiny and the destiny of the world. Shall we be less ceremonious, less impressed by the majesty of the interview, or less animated by the hope to win the royal favour, when the Sovereign of the Universe is the personage before whom we stand? Assuredly not. Then bow the knee, worship and adore with every symbol of humility—with every emotion of profound and lowly veneration. *השתחו לה' בהדרת קדש* "Prostrate fall ye before the Eternal in all the beauty of sanctity." Then only will you heed the Royal Sage's charge, and keep your feet when you go to the house of God.

III.

We come, thirdly, to inquire, What is the meaning of the expression *וקרוב לשמוע* "Draw near to hearken?" To what and to whom is this attentive hearing to be given? Brethren, many are the voices which resound within these walls—voices which require not living accents to give them vehemence, but which exercise their sacred influence in spiritual energy. We enter these sacred courts, and, as we turn towards this holy place, we bow the head and bend the knee before the

eternal mandates written here above; and, if we are at all susceptible of holy emotions, we must recognise something in the aspect of the place proclaiming, with a voice sweetly intelligible *קדש לה* "Holiness to the Eternal." And if we come hither, when none besides is here, and silence solemn and sublime prevails, we shall not fail to be impressed by the calm so sacred and profound, and amid the stillness of the hour, we will distinctly hear a whispering voice from within us *מה נורה המקום הזה* "how awful is this place!" And when we mix our accents with the loud praises and supplications of our fellow-worshippers, if our fervour be such as will elevate us above the reality of earth, and carry our thoughts to Heaven, O then we shall hear the sweetest voice *והיה מרם יקראו ואני אענה* "Before you call, I will answer; while yet you are speaking, I will hear." So too, my brethren, every solemnity within these walls addresses us with some admonitory, cheering, or comforting voice, if we only have within us the spiritual emotion which will lead to its recognition. But, besides these, there are actual living voices, to which you should draw near to hearken. There is the voice of the law which is rehearsed to you, week after week, and which addresses to you, some precepts of Divine behest,—which reminds you of duties, and inculcates those virtues that shine resplendently upon its every page of wisdom. There is the voice of the prophets, which speaks to you of your past and of your future;—of the glories of the one—of the brightness of the other,—which assures you of your destiny, re-kindles your hopes, and re-animates your hearts with

the promises of your God. And there is the voice of the preacher, which feebly essays to expound and illustrate—to admonish and denounce. Though a fellow-sinner with you, he is the sentinel to proclaim the danger which threatens all alike; and when his voice is heard, with the doctrine of morality or the denunciation of Divine wrath, it is the echo of Scripture which you hear, the rehearsed accents of sage and seer gone before us. Say then, brethren, do you come near to listen to those varied voices, or, rather, do you come with the disposition to turn a deaf ear to the spiritual ones, and to ridicule or criticise the physical ones? Do you ever follow and dwell upon the words which from the law are read? Even when you are summoned to approach and stand beside it, as its proclaimer, do you care to accompany, much less to understand, the portion which the ministrant reads on *your* behalf? When, too, the pulpit sends forth its words of reproof and instruction, which, however they may fail in mental merit, yet burn with the preacher's zeal, do you heed his accents, or do you not rather seek to condemn his judgment, rail at his want of eloquence, criticize his style, and doubt his sincerity? Nay, my friends, ye do not regard the voices of the sanctuary: ye come not near to hearken, שמעו שמעו ואל תבינו "Ye hear, indeed, but will not understand." Ye come, indeed, but bring הנסילים זבח "the sacrifice of fools."

IV.

The sacrifice of fools, we have said, brethren, and those are the words of Solomon in the text. What

they mean, we have lastly to discover. The erudite Rashi, in his exposition of this passage, describes the sacrifice of fools, as being *שיחמה ויביא קרבן* "that they sin while they bring their offering." Behold our precise position; we come hither to discharge a duty of religion, and, when here, we violate that very duty. Nor have we even the excuse which Solomon ascribes to the fools *כי אינם יודעים לעשות רע* "that they know not that they do evil," for we are not so spiritually blind, as not to feel that we transgress. Alas! we sin, and are content to sin, for know we not that we transgress when on sabbath days and holy festivals we come direct from our labour hither, sacrilegiously to bless God for the rest he has appointed us, and, ere those hypocritical words are free from our lips, we go forth again to desecrate the holiness of the day, by the pursuit of our worldly calling? Do we not know that we sin, when, after spending the chief hours of prayer sluggardly in bed, we come hither near the close of the solemnities, and then apply ourselves, not to pray, but to converse—not to humble ourselves, but to exchange the ribald joke, or indulge the smile of levity? Do we not know that we sin, when we engage in our devotions with mere mechanical efforts, and direct ourselves as to the accomplishment of a task, volubly pronouncing language that we do not care to understand? Do we not know that we sin, when the holy calm which should pervade these precincts, is marred by vehement shouts and hypocritic tears, all meant to illustrate the intensity of a feigned devotion? Brethren, let the truth force itself upon our conviction: we do not realise the solemnity of

worship and the value of its offices. We insult our Maker with the hollow pretence of serving Him: we bring strange fire to His altar, and heed not that it is unsanctified. But, brethren, too long have we remained indifferent to the highest privilege which our nature enjoys—that of Divine communion. Too long have we brought the sacrifice of fools—an offering that savours of idolatry in the error of its intention and the unholiness of its character. Now that we have entered on the period of propitiation,—now that the holy work of preparation has commenced, and atonement for sin engages our constant efforts,—let us correct the evil, and cultivate becomingly the functions of worship. Soon, brethren, you will be summoned to these courts, in celebration of great and solemn rites. Soon will the shrill tones of the Shofar be heard, ringing its warning in every ear. Soon will the fast of Expiation humble us in the dust, with tears and repentance. The grace we have to seek from our God must be asked in prayer; and therefore, I conjure you to begin betimes, to give that sacred exercise the spiritual energy which only can endow it with efficacy. Commence this very hour, and clothe yourselves with the spirit of seriousness and devotion. Banish all worldly thoughts from your minds, and direct yourselves to pray that God will help you, and teach you how to approach Him, now and evermore. With deepest earnestness, let me entreat you to avail yourselves of the blessed privilege which God confers upon us, when He says וקראתם אותי והלכתם והתפללתם אלי ושמעתי אליכם “You shall call upon me, and ye shall go and pray

unto me, and I will hearken unto you:” וּבִקְשַׁתֶּם אוֹתִי “When ye seek me, ye shall find me, provided ye seek me with all your heart.” This is the condition, the sole condition, on which we enjoy a gracious and glorious boon. Profit by it, I conjure you, and be happy. Do not provoke the wrath of Heaven, by neglecting or depreciating it—by lightly regarding the services of the synagogue, or by withholding yourselves from God’s presence. Come, I pray you, to this sacred edifice, when its open portals invite you to devotion. Come to enjoy your sabbath-rest, to celebrate your festal happiness; to bring your peace-offering and your sin-offering, in the shape of a prayerful spirit and a contrite heart! And when ye come, come not for fashion or diversion—come not to display or to converse, but come to worship your God and Father. באו שערינו בתורה הצרותיו בתהלה “Come into His gates with thanksgiving—into His courts with praise.” Then, and then only, will you experience the blessings, rich and constant, which result from a frequent communion with your beneficent guardian. From the confession of your sins, you will rise relieved,—from the submission of your wants, you will remain satisfied,—from the supplication of new mercies, you will depart contented. You will return to your homes, calm and happy in the consciousness of having performed your duty; and the service of your God, will be productive, in you, of peace, righteousness, and eternal life. אשרי תבחר ותקרב “Happy he שכון הצריך נשבעה במוב ביתך קדש היכליך: whom Thou choolest and bringest near, that he may dwell in Thy courts, he shall be satisfied with

the goodness of Thy House, the holiness of Thy temple.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD! merciful and gracious Lord, infinite in benevolence and truth, whose wonders continually shine around us,—whose glory all creation proclaims. We meet Thee, everywhere, O Eternal! everywhere behold Thy great doings and Thy holy workings. We see Thy majesty by day in the expanse of the Heavens,—we behold Thee nightly in the glimmering of the heavenly orbs; but most beautifully, most gloriously do we meet Thee in the holy sanctuary which men have erected unto Thee, and where Thou sittest enthroned amid the psalmody of Israel. It is there, O God, that Thine illimitable mercies are exhibited to us,—it is there that we behold the magnitude of Thy wisdom which worketh for the happiness of Thy creatures. It is Thy holy house which awakens and cherishes those sentiments of gratitude, which form the sole return we can make for Thy never failing bounty. There it is, O Eternal, that we find the sweetest consolation in adversity;—it is its portal which offers to us the surest refuge from our unruly passions. Teach us then, O Father, to appreciate Thy glorious boon, so that it produce in us the happy moral effects which Thy wisdom hath designed. Let Thy holy spirit fill us with the conviction, that we can only render ourselves worthy of that infinite love which Thou renewest unto us with each new morning light, when we seek to render unto Thee, the tribute of a

grateful soul poured out in the solemn assemblies of Thy people. And when we present ourselves before Thee, O Sovereign, let our hearts be penetrated with a sense of Thy glorious majesty, and let us be impressed with the belief that every act, every desire, every thought is criminal in Thy temple, which has not for its aim the praise of Thee,—which has not its origin in the love of Thee, which confines not itself to the worship of Thee. Imprint upon our hearts the sacred truth, that in reverencing Thy sanctuary, we reverence Thee—that when we cease to assemble in Thy courts and to worship Thee becomingly, we cease to be grateful for Thy mercies. With this conviction, Lord, let us approach Thy days of solemn convocation, the ימים נוראים “the awful days,” which Thou hast appointed for penitence and prayer, so that we may reap plentifully of the blessings of grace and pardon, love and favor, of which this season is the harvest, and we, Thy people, the humble gleaners. Amen.

XIII.

SPIRITUAL PEACE.

A SERMON FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

בּוֹרָא נִיב שְׁפָתַיִם שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם לְרַחוּק וּלְקָרוֹב אָמַר ה'
וּרְפָאתֵינוּ: וְהַרְשָׁעִים כִּים נִגְרֵשׁ כִּי הִשְׁקַט לֹא יוּכַל וַיִּגְרֶשׁוּ
מִיָּמֵינוּ רָפֶשׁ וְטִיט אֵין שְׁלוֹם אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי לְרַשָּׁעִים:

"I who create the fruit of the lips—proclaim peace—peace to him that is far and to him that is near, saith the Eternal, and I will heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled sea which can never be at rest, whose waters cast up filth and mire: there is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked."—*Isaiah* lvii. 19—21.

BRETHREN,—We are assembled to perform the greatest, holiest solemnity of our faith. The tones of the Shofar have been heard in the city, its warning notes have summoned us to seek peace from the God of mercy; and obedient to His proclamation, we are here with the fruits of our lips, "לְכַפֵּר עַל נַפְשֹׁתֵינוּ לִפְנֵי ה'" "to atone for our souls before the Eternal." In this, the service of repentance, we are being joined by millions of our race. מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפֹת הָאָרֶץ From the four corners of earth are ascending this day, the supplications of a people who approach the throne of mercy that their

humble spirits may be revived—their contrite hearts reanimated. The sun which has risen upon our solemnities to-day, witnesseth also the kindred rites of every fold in Israel, *ממורה שמש ועד מבואו*, “from where he rises, to where he goeth down;” and through these sacred hours, when the portals of grace are thrown open to invite the erring child of Israel to seek peace and live, one thrilling strain of harmonious psalmody is ringing throughout the earth, to celebrate the mercies of the God of love and beneficence. But, my brethren, wherever the congregations of Jacob are collected in worship, there is one sole object attached to every supplication: though wide apart the worshippers, their orisons converge to one end, and that is, to draw from the exercises of this august occasion, the blessings of peace and pardon—to claim admission to the boon proffered in our text—the boon of spiritual peace and healing. In developing the nature of that boon, my brethren, and in discovering the circumstances attached to it, we will also keep in view the practical object to which all worship is to-day directed, and we will strive to elicit from the prophet’s words, a doctrine at once consonant to the spirit of this great occasion, uniform with the attributes of God, and adapted to our present condition as supplicants for forgiveness—claimants of peace and healing.

With this view, brethren, we will consider the text as suggestive of three questions.

I.—WHAT IS THE PROFFERED PEACE?

II.—TO WHOM IS IT OFFERED?

III.—HOW IS IT TO BE ACQUIRED?

I.

What is the proffered peace?

Peace, as a general term, is the messenger of God, sent to us to render our condition here below "as days of heaven upon earth." When the din of war resounds through the world, and men go forth to fight and bleed and die;—when empires are convulsed and vast armies are marshalled in the field, with death and desolation as their van-guard;—when poverty is made more poor and misery and woe are spread abroad as the hateful consequences of human contest, there is one cry put forth by every heart—the cry for peace. The patriot who has fallen in his country's cause with the ebb of his life's blood, prays, that peace may soon give freedom to his fatherland. The mother as she listens to the cannon's roar and invokes God's protection on her child, exposed to the perils of the battle-field—prays, too, for peace to allay the fears of her maternal bosom. The orphans, whose father has sacrificed his life to his country's call, leaving them without other staff or stay—they, too, pray that peace may soon prevail, that others may be spared the stroke which has befallen them. Yes; all invoke the angel of peace to fill some void, reigning in their hearts—all invoke peace as the greatest boon befitting their condition; but that is physical peace—the peace that regulates the prosperity of earth—the peace that unites mankind in the arts of civilized life, so that universal happiness may be diffused—universal good promoted. Again, when there is strife between man and man—when spite and malice are dominant, and all the flood

of hatred, which springs from rancour, is let loose to engulf the sweet emotions of brotherly love, then, too, there is a cry for peace. Hear humble innocence, as writhing under the oppressive hand of misused power, it cries aloud for peace! Hark at the plaint of distress which persecuted meekness sends forth, as all the injuries of malevolence are set in motion to crush him! He, too, calls for peace; but this is moral peace—the peace that is to reconcile man to his neighbour—to stay the whirlwind of passion, and to dispel the clouds of strife and disunion, extending the sweet and holy calm of love and harmony. But the peace of our text—the peace which occupies the fiery eloquence of Isaiah, is distinct from both these. Not over human warfare or human passion is it summoned to preside—not to sate man's ambition, or to repress man's hatred is it invoked, but to interpose between sinning man and offended Heaven—to restrain the just displeasure of God and avert the stroke of His vengeance from iniquity. It is spiritual peace, my brethren, the peace which, emanating from the Eternal, descends upon the kindred spark which animates our nature, to make us pure, peaceful and happy; to regenerate us, and to assimilate our spirit to its sacred and divine original. This is the peace, for which man, though surrounded by all the appliances of fortune, and sated with every earthly joy, yet pants, כַּאֵל תַּעֲרֹג עַל אֲפִיקֵי מַיִם “as the hart pants after the waterbrooks.” This is the peace, on which the convert sets his highest hopes, for which he weeps, and fasts, and prays, and knows no happiness again, until he feels it entering into his soul. This is the peace, for which the dying sinner groans,

as on the couch of death, he feels the spirit about to wing its way on high, untranquillised, unblessed by divine pacification. And this is the peace, which is offered by the offices of this sacred day—the peace which, on the testimony of the text, God Himself proffers to His children. He invites them, through the solemnities of His **יום כפור** to receive at His hands grace instead of punishment,—rich showers of mercies instead of torrents of wrath,—in place of indignation, and vengeance, and death, the rich blessings of spiritual peace. Press forward then, betimes, my brethren, and seize the proffered boon. Ye giddy youth who hurry on the journey of life, all entranced by the seductions of pleasure, come hither to take the peace proffered by your God and your faith. Ye votaries of worldly gain, whose greatest care is to gather manna—to accumulate the hoard that is to shed no joy upon your lives, and yet must be abandoned, at your death,—approach and collect the spiritual food of peace and pardon, which alone can make you happy. And you too, old men, on the confines of life, who fear to glance upon the past, or look forward to the future, lest the sin of the one, or the death of the other appal your senses,—come hither, and let this day and this text introduce you to yourselves, and teaching you to make your peace with God, prepare you for the dark abode, whose threshold ye even now are treading. Come all! the sinning and the good—the man of violence and the man of holiness **שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם לְרוּחַ וּלְקָרֹב** “there is peace,—spiritual peace for the distant and the near.” But, brethren, pause we to enquire, whether indiscriminately to all,

peace is to be dispensed; whether God's grace is equally shed over those who gratefully accept the boon and those for whom it has no value. Not so, my hearers; the text especially describes the classes to whom the invitation is vouchsafed, and to discover them, we will proceed to the second head of discourse, by asking:

II.

To whom is spiritual peace offered?

First, **שלום לרחוק** "peace to him that is afar off"—to him that is estranged from his God, and seeks to return to Him with penitence for his atonement offering. The more distant the sinner has been from virtue, the more meritorious his re-subjection beneath her sway—the more acceptable to God is his sincere conversion. This is the unequivocal declaration of our sages, **גדולים בעלי תשובה מצדיקים גמורים** "greater are penitents, than men confirmedly righteous." And this is an opinion franked by reason. Reflect on the condition of that man who has thrown off all the restraints of religion. See him violating honour and chastity—scorning all dictation—rebellious against every rule. Mark him, as he tramples over right and justice, making his will alone the criterion for his actions. Then conceive, if ye can, the moral revolution which must be wrought in that man's soul, ere he can be brought to present himself before His God—self-accusing—self-reproving—to deprecate past sins, and to implore divine grace and pardon. Well is it, then, that even to the most rebellious sinner, the opportunity of repentance is offered—that to the

utmost depths of iniquity God's mercy can reach, to extricate frail man from the snares of sin? Such a dispensation is a complete exposition of God's love for His children; it speaks in accents unmistakable the consoling truth which forms the basis of the sinner's hope *כי אם בשוב רשע מדרכיו חיה* "that God desires not the death of the wicked, but that he should turn from his way and live." And, O my brethren, what a sweet solace is this, to us in our pilgrimage through a life beset with dangers and temptations, where impurity beckons on the right, iniquity on the left,—where every step onward may precipitate us in an abyss, from which extrication would be impossible, but for the loving-kindness of the Eternal! What comfort in the thought, that, though scarlet-hued be our iniquities, God's mercy will blanch them like snow—though deep-dyed as crimson, they can attain the pure whiteness of wool. Who, then, will refuse peace if he be not excluded from its sacred tabernacle? Who can be deaf to the invitation of heaven, when around us hovers the messenger of the Eternal God, beckoning to the man of guilt, and to the son of violence, and whispering with every reproof of conscience, *שלום שלום לרחוק* "peace—peace to him that is far off"? But is it only to the remote from virtue that peace is offered? only to them who are on the utmost confines of iniquity, that the cheering proclamation is made? No, my brethren, though God receives with grace the repentant man of evil, he offers peace also *לקרוב* to him that is near; He invites with love the erring child whose feet have stumbled without guilty motive—

whose conscience accusing him of venial misdeeds, brings him to the footstool of the Lord to win forgiveness. His offering is the same crushed spirit and contrite heart, brought by his more guilty brother; and though his remorse be not so violent—his self-crimination so vehement, he yet comes to claim the benefits of the season, and to throw himself with confidence upon the comforting influence of these sacred hours. Well, God will visit him too, with peace; from the confession of his sin he will depart tranquil and happy, and he will set a closer watch upon his acts—will regulate his thoughts, his words, and his desires in the future, because he will feel that while **מכסה פשעיו לא יצליח** “he who conceals his transgressions prospers not” **ומודה ועוזב ירוחם** “he who confesses and forsakes them will be compassionated.” But, brethren, though we have thus seen peace proclaimed far and near, our text yet continues emphatically to declare **אין שלום אמר אלהי לרשעים** “there is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked.” How is it, that while they who are the most remote from godliness, are invited to share in the proffered peace, the text should so expressly exclude the “wicked?” Brethren, let us repeat with all the force and energy we can command, there is no degree of wickedness that will render us unworthy of God’s grace and pardon, provided we turn to him with sincere repentance; but there is no crime of greater magnitude than the attempt to delude God, by an ephemeral repentance **שכן לילה היה ובן לילה אבר** “which springs up in a night and perishes in a night”; no greater insult to the Majesty of Heaven, than to seek forgiveness to-day,

for sins we go forth to-morrow to re-commit. Such are the **רשעים** mentioned in the text, **כִּים נָגַשׁ** "like the troubled sea," **כִּי הִשְׁקַט לֹא יוֹכֵל** "they never can know rest,"—they fluctuate between iniquity and professed atonement. They stalk abroad with violence in their hand—committing wrong, yet triumphing in their infamy; and if conscience should remind them of their guilt, they have no ear for its reproof, but defer repentance to a more convenient season. They are those referred to by our sages, **הַאוֹמֵר אַחַתָּא וְאֵשׁוּב** **אֶחָתָּא וְאֵשׁוּב** who say, "I will sin and repent—sin again and repent again," but who never take to heart the truth **אֵין מִסְפִּיקִין בִּידוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת תְּשׁוּבָה** that they thus place themselves beyond the possibility of true repentance. Or, fixing prospectively the date of their atonement, they say, **אֶחָתָּא וְיוֹם הַכְּפוּרִים מְכַפֵּר** "I will sin, and the day of expiation shall remit the sin," but they forget that a day clad with the most sublime and sacred functions, can have no relation to their systematic penitence; **אֵין יוֹם הַכְּפוּרִים מְכַפֵּר**, that it will not expiate their iniquity, because reliant upon its offices, they come **לִכְפֹּת כְּאֶגְמוֹן רֹאשָׁם** "to bow their heads like a bulrush," **וְשָׂק וְאֶפֶר יִצְּעוּ** and assume the sackcloth and ashes of humble contrition, crying with their lips for pardon, while their hearts remain perverse and impenitent. It is against these, my brethren, that our text utters its dread denunciation;—their lip-worship and hypocritical outpourings it assimilates to mire and dirt, cast up by the troubled flood of their restless passions, and which God rejects as an abomination—as an impure offering on this sacred altar. No, brethren, there is no peace for the

hypocrite; religion denounces him, and God discards him; and though vehement may be his prayers, rigid his mortifications while they continue, they are valueless in the sight of Him who penetrates their specious character, and reads in the hypocrite's heart not only the determination to do to-morrow what he deprecates to-day, but also the abominable sentiment that he would be good and obedient, if he could but obtain a guarantee of indemnity for all the gold and silver he may sacrifice to duty. Therefore, saith God, **והרשעים כים נגרש כי השקט לא יוכל ויגרשו מימיו רפש ומים : אין שלום אמר אלהי לרשעים :** "But the wicked are like the troubled sea which can never be at rest, but whose waters cast up filth and mire. There is no peace for the wicked."

III.

Now, brethren, that we have discovered the nature of the peace proffered in the text, and the classes to whom that proffer is made, it only remains for us, thirdly, to determine the conditions attached to it, ere we put forth our own claims to share in the boon. Can we, dare we hope, that God's mercy is extended to all sinners, without any improving effort on their part?—that the rich treasures of grace and pardon are poured out upon us, without any direction of our will and our energies towards winning them? Not so, my brethren; the very opening words of our text serve to remove such an impression. God there announces Himself as **בורא נים שפתים** "the Creator of the fruit of the lips," and teaches us that prayer—true heartfelt prayer, with its concomitants of humility and devotion, form the means, the only means, of

promoting spiritual peace among the far and the near. And if we inquire into the character of prayer, we shall be immediately convinced of its high qualification to become the interceding messenger between God and our sinning souls. Prayer is but an effort of our immortal spark חלק אלה ממעל "the portion from above," to commune with its parent source. Upwards soars the spirit with every word which forms on our lips; and soon, abstracted from all that is around, with eyes, heart and soul lifted up to Heaven, we feel a comforting influence spreading through our breast; every emotion within us becomes one of joy and happiness, and we experience the sweet effects of spiritual peace. It is thus, my brethren, that the fruit of the lips reconducts us and reconciles us to our God;—it is thus that true prayer becomes the expiatory sacrifice, and calls down grace and pardon. But remember, brethren, what we have so often sought to impress upon you, that mechanical supplication—spiritless verbiage—is not prayer. Remember that God looks never to the precise expression, but to the heart which originates it;—that as He creates the fruit of the lips, he will set no value upon words that lack the tone, the feeling, the spiritual energy of a contrite heart. In vain, then, your vehement outpourings, futile your multitudinous prayers, profitless your tearful accents and abject prostrations. They only desecrate the character of this blessed day, by converting it into the anniversary of broken promises and spiritless performances. They may call down upon you the wrathful indignation of a righteous God, but they cannot, they will not, give

you peace. Then let me summon you to cultivate the exalted privilege of prayer, that it may yield you to-day, a rich harvest of grace and pardon. Arouse yourselves from the fancied security into which ye are lulled. Awake from the slumber of conscience, from the lethargy of the soul, and prepare, prepare to meet your God. Know ye not, that the pestilence is stalking through the land, blasting with its mephitic breath the lovely and the young, — spitting its venom upon the most promising soil, and spreading its sable wings over thousands at a swoop? And with the destroying angel hovering around us, can we, dare we, repeat the mockery of former years, צעקנו בפינו חטאנו פתלתול ועקש לבנו “Crying with our mouths, we have sinned while our hearts remain forward and obdurate”? No, no, dear brethren; arouse yourselves betimes, and profit by the offices of this great and awful day. קחו עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה' “Take to yourselves words and return to the Eternal.” Let your prayers proceed from contrite hearts, spirits fraught with humble penitence; let them announce on High, whither ye direct them, that ye have come from the confines of sin, with the atonement offering most grateful in the sight of God, רוח נשברה לב נשבר ונרכה, “a broken spirit, a heart crushed and contrite.” Then shall ye have peace eternal, heavenly peace, for God will heal your wound, and re-animate you, giving you לב טהור ורוח נכון “the pure heart and upright spirit” that befit the convert. Yes, you shall have peace, ye worshippers of the golden calf—ye refined idolators of a civilized age. Your outrages upon an idol-hating God shall be forgiven—your offerings to the Baal of

wealth shall be blotted from the record—your ministerings around the fane of interest shall no more testify against you. *You shall be healed*: but ye must pray, with all your heart, for pardon, and you must vow to raze the idol, that its hateful influence may never more seduce you from your God.

You, too, shall have peace, ye recreants from the covenant of your God—ye violators of that sacred day, thrice hallowed by Divine appointment. Your arrogant reliance upon arms of flesh shall not be visited—the evasions ye have employed to rob the sabbath of its sanctity while ye labour by another's hands, will be remitted. *You shall be healed*: but your spirit must pour forth its contrition in humble, tearful accents, and ye must promise to restrain your feet from following your inclination on God's holy day, calling it and feeling it a delight לְקֹדֶשׁ א' מְכֹבֵד “sacred to the Lord, and clad in glory.”

And you shall have peace, ye habitual calumniators, whose hateful industry envenoms words the most pure, acts the most innocent, intentions the most holy.

You shall be healed: but when ye pray for pardon, with entire heart and firmest resolution, you must renounce your ignominious calling, ye must vow to remove the rankling arrow from the innocence ye have pierced, to extract the poison from the wounds your calumny has inflicted, so that your neighbour's reputation may cease to mortify.

Ye shall all have peace, ye sons and daughters of Israel, who have been estranged from God שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם לְרֹחוֹק וּלְקֶרֶב “Peace, peace to the far and the near.” Your tears of sorrow—your emotions of penitence,

and your prayer of humility will be accepted, as atonement offerings upon the altars of your God, and will plead for grace and pardon; but you must feel earnestness in your devotion, and, under the sanction of this day and this place, you must solemnly vow amendment, and resolve never more to sin as you have sinned, but to set God always before you. **או** **יבקע נשחר אורך** "Then shall your light break forth as morning **וארכתך מהרה תצמח** and your spiritual health spring forth apace" **והלך לפניך צדקך** "Your righteousness shall go before you, **יבספך** and the glory of the Eternal will gather you in;" and when this day shall close, a ray of tranquil happiness will pervade your breasts, and bright angels will hover round you as messengers of peace and pardon, whispering, as their message from on high **אתה שלום וביתך** "Peace unto you, peace to your household, peace to all that belongs to you."

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God! Lord of mercy and forgiveness, whose tender love did institute this great atonement day, that Thy children may approach Thy footstool and receive grace instead of judgment—pity instead of wrath. We are assembled in Thy presence, to supplicate remission of sin; and though we know that we have no good works to plead for us—that we have rebelliously transgressed while we knew of impending visitation, we venture to rest our hopes on Thy benignity, praying Thee to remember our frailty, **ורחמך יקרמו רגוזך** and to let Thy tender mercies have precedence over Thy just displeasure. We are

here, Father, with our fast, our penitence, and our prayer, to sue for pardon; then teach us how to render our fast an affliction of the soul—how to give our penitence the seal of conversion—how to make our prayers devout and spirit-born. O God, we hope for pardon, and yet we strive not to deserve it; we pour out supplications and multiply our tears and our prostrations, but we lack the bruised spirit and the contrite heart that can only lead us to Thy mercy, and secure for us, holy, heavenly peace. Therefore do we invoke Thy help, O Father! O visit us with Thy enlightenment, that we may see the path of peace, and that we may employ the spiritual efforts which will conduct us thereunto. Give us an understanding heart that we may recognise the evil of our way, and escape, while yet there is time, from the perils, imminent and fearful, that beset it. Help us in our deprecation of iniquity; help us in our strivings after virtue, and give us peace and comfort in our perturbation—encouragement and support in our repentance—grace and pardon for our transgressions, for Thou art “the God who givest strength to Thy people—the God who blestest Thy people with peace.” Do Thou, then, who art the Source of living grace, accept our prayer, our penitence, and our fast. Do Thou, who art the Rock of Ages, give strength to our efforts, energy to our promises, fulfilment to our vows; and when the closing hour of this holy day arrives, let us, in spirit, hear Thy voice of mercy whispering words of peace to our troubled bosoms—announcing נשאת עון עמך כסית כל חטאתם “that Thou hast forgiven the iniquities of Thy people, and hast hidden all their sin.” Amen.

XIV.

CONFIRMATION SERVICE

USED AT THE SYNAGOGUE OF THE BIRMINGHAM HEBREW
CONGREGATION.

The Minister ascends the pulpit and the confirmands place themselves before him on the platform of the ark—the Minister then says :—

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS—You have now arrived at that important era in your lives, when, taking upon yourselves the obligations of our Holy Law, you become, each of you **בר מצוה** “a son of the commandment;” and you must henceforward stand in the community of your brethren as competent and responsible Israelites. Are you acquainted with the many onerous duties that devolve upon the God-fearing Jew?

[Each Confirmand answers “I am.”]

Have you received the necessary instruction in our ancient faith, to acquaint you with its characteristic tenets?

[Answer, “I have.”]

You will, then, repeat the doctrines of the Jewish belief, held in common by the whole house of Israel?

[The Confirmands repeat the Creed **אני מאמין** in Hebrew and English.]

MY BRETHREN—Your acquaintance with the articles of our faith, testifies that you are instructed in the knowledge of your holy religion, and that you are worthy sons of Israel—worthy to be numbered among the “kingdom of priests,” and to be recognised as of the “holy nation;” worthy, in fine, to participate in the inheritance of תורת משה. To you, then, I confide the law of God. You are, with your people, sharers of the great and sacred charge received from the Eternal Himself. You are the guardians of that law, and witnesses on earth, of its truth. Let me remind you that you have been admitted to a patrimony that is beyond all worth; that you receive, in the solemnities of this day, a treasure above all human estimation. To every possible condition of life, is your inheritance adapted. In every possible change of circumstances, you will from it, derive incalculable benefit. “The law of the Eternal is perfect, it comforts the soul; the testimony of the Eternal is sure, it maketh wise the simple; the statutes of the Eternal are upright, they rejoice the heart; the commandment of the Eternal is pure, it enlightens the eye; more desirable far than gold—than much pure gold; sweeter far than honey, than the droppings of the honey comb.” Be you admonished and instructed by this Law, and for its due observance you will reap a rich reward. עץ חיים הוא למחויקים בה ותומכיה מאושר. A tree of life, it is, to those who lay fast hold of it; its supporters are ever happy; דרכיה דרכי נועם וכל נתיבותיה שלום “its ways are ways of loveliness; its paths all lead to peace.”

“And this commandment, which I command you

this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far from thee; it is not in the heavens, that thou shouldst say, "Who will go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, "Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?" But the Word is very near to thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

והיה אם שמוע תשמע בקול ה' אלהיך לשמור לעשות את כל מצותיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום ונתנך ה' אלהיך עליון על כל גויי הארץ; ובאו עליך כל הברכות האלה והשיגך כי תשמע בקול ה' אלהיך: ברוך אתה בעיר וברוך אתה בשדה: ברוך פרי בטןך ופרי אדמתך ופרי בהמתך שגר אלפך ועשתרות צאנך: ברוך מנאך ומשארתיך: ברוך אתה בבאך וברוך אתה בצאתך:

"And it shall be if thou wilt hearken diligently to the voice of the Eternal, thy God, to observe and perform all His commandments, which I command thee this day, the Eternal, thy God, will set thee high above all the nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall come to thee, and pursue thee, provided thou wilt hearken to the voice of the Eternal, thy God. Thou wilt be blessed in the city, and thou wilt be blessed in the field. Blessed will be the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land; the increase of thy cattle and the increase of thy flocks. Blessed will be thy basket and thy trough. Thou wilt be blessed when thou comest in, and thou wilt be blessed when thou goest out."

והיה אם לא תשמע בקול ה' אלהיך לשמור לעשות את כל מצותיו וחקתיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום ובאו עליך

כל הקללות האלה והשיגוך : ארור אתה בעיר וארור אתה
 בשדה : ארור מנאך ומשארתיך : ארור פרי בטנך ופרי
 אדמתך שגר אלפיך ועשתרות צאנך : ארור אתה בבאך
 וארור אתה בצאתך :

"And it shall be if thou wilt *not* hearken to the voice of the Eternal, thy God, to observe and perform all His commandments and statutes which I command you this day, there will come to thee these curses, and they will pursue thee. Thou wilt be cursed in the city, and thou wilt be cursed in the field. Cursed will be thy basket and thy trough. Cursed will be the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy ground; the increase of thy cattle and the increase of thy flock. Thou wilt be cursed in thy coming in, and thou wilt be cursed in thy going out."

These are the words, my brethren, which Moses employed to set before our fathers, the blessings of obedience, and the curses of disobedience. Addressed to a whole nation, they have a national character; but I set them before you to-day, solemnly to admonish you of this truth, that while God's blessings will attend you if you be observant and obedient men, a heedlessness of your religion and a neglect of its duties will be sure, sooner or later, to entail upon you sorrow and suffering. "Thus I have placed before you, this day, the blessing and the curse. The blessing, if you obey the commands of the Eternal your God; and the curse, if you will not obey the commands of the Eternal your God, but turn aside out of the way which I have commanded you, to go after other gods whom ye have not known."

Say now, my dear young friends, will you say, like

your fathers at the foot of Horeb, נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע “we will do and we will hearken;” and will you vow here, in the presence of the God of Israel and in this assembly of your people, to cherish your inheritance—His eternal and immutable law—to live in that law, to die in that law, and through that law alone to seek salvation hereafter?

[The confirmants repeat severally.]

“I will vow here, in the presence of the God of Israel and in this assembly of my people, to cherish my inheritance—the eternal and immutable law—to live in that law, to die in that law, and through that law alone to seek salvation hereafter.”

Minister. Now, therefore, you must fear the Eternal, and serve Him in sincerity and truth, and be never enticed to worship other gods of vanity and sinfulness met with in the world, where interest and gain, unholy pleasure and unrighteous desire, are prone to claim your devotion.

Confirmants: חֲלִילָה לָנוּ מֵעֲזֹב אֶת ה' לַעֲבוֹד אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
 “God forbid that we should forsake the Eternal to serve other Gods:” גַּם אֲנַחְנוּ נִעְבֹּד אֶת ה' כִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 “We also will serve the Eternal for He is our God.”

Minister. But you cannot serve the Eternal, who is a holy God and a jealous God, who claims the devotion of your hearts, unless you shun the path of evil and iniquity. You must cleave to His law after this day, as you this moment profess to do. You must ever cherish and observe ALL its precepts, that you may continue worthy to be remembered in the fold of Israel, and to share in their privileges, their hopes, and their glorious destiny.

Confirmants. לא כי את ה' נעבוד "Nay, but we will serve the Eternal."

Minister. עדים אתם בכם כי אתם בחרתם לנכ את ה' לעבוד אותו "Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen the Eternal to serve Him."

Confirmants. עדים "We are witnesses."

Minister. Now, therefore, put away evil from your sight, and solemnly incline your hearts for ever to the Eternal, the God of your fathers.

Confirmants. את ה' אלהינו נעבוד וקולו נשמע "The Eternal, our God, we will serve, and His voice we will obey."

PRAYER SAID BY THE CONFIRMANTS.

Eternal, our God, and God of our Fathers! we Thy children have approached Thee this day, to claim our portion in the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. Lord! receive us with favour, and let Thy blessing descend upon us. Cherish within us, the emotions, which this solemn occasion has awoken in our breasts. Strengthen, too, every resolve created by it, and endue us with the spirit of obedience which will, under Thy blessing, lead us to walk in Thy commandments, and render us good men and faithful Israelites. יהיו לרצון אמרי פינו והגיון לבנו לפניך ה' צורנו וגואלנו "Let the words of our mouth, and the meditations of our heart, be acceptable before Thee, Eternal, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen."

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT A CONFIRMATION, HELD ON
THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, 5613.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

On this auspicious occasion, when in the presence of your assembled brethren, I have received your vows of fealty to the God of your fathers, it would not be seemly to dismiss you without some especial words of counsel to direct you on your path, and to illustrate the duties you have just assumed. Let me then refer you to the portion of this morning, where you will find the following words: **ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר כפות תמרים וענף עץ עבות וערבי נהל ושמתם לפני ה' אלהיכם שבועת ימים:** "And you shall take on the first day the fruit of the tree Hadar, and branches of palm-trees, a bough of the tree Aboth, and the willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God, seven days." (Lev. xxiii. 40).

This text divides itself into four heads, each of which will, under the rendering of our ancient doctors, develope some seasonable instruction. We shall, therefore, briefly consider—

- I. THE FRUIT OF THE TREE "HADAR."
- II. THE BRANCHES OF PALM-TREES.
- III. THE BOUGH OF THE TREE "ABOTH."
- IV. THE WILLOWS OF THE BROOK.

This day, my brethren, when you have vowed fealty to the Law of God, may be aptly called in

relation to your lives, יום הראשון "the first day." You have, in the public congregation of your people, put forth your claim to share in the heritage of Jacob; and you have avowed your acquaintance with the duties which devolve upon you as Israelites. You have rehearsed a portion of the Divine Law in the hearing of your brethren, and you have publicly praised the God of your fathers for having "selected you from all other nations" to make you the depositaries of that Law. These ceremonies proclaim that you have to-day attained religious majority. Therefore is this to you the dawning of religious life—the birth-day of moral responsibility; emphatically יום הראשון "the first day," when you must, in obedience to the text, rejoice before the Eternal—bringing with you the elements of spiritual joy and happiness in—

I. The fruit of the tree Hadar.

This, as expounded by our sages, is the אתרוג or citron, a type of the heart, teaching you that the first sacrifice which you owe to the Eternal, who has watched over you from helpless infancy and protected you through thousands of dangers, is a heart of purity and love—a heart that like the citron which symbolises it, must have no blemish—must be free from every tainting influence, and must be offered with all its infant innocence—with all its native fragrance. Now, my young friends, standing as you do on the threshold of responsible life, you will readily give me the assurance that your hearts are not corrupted, but that they throb even now with their first religious emotions, inspiring you with all the fervid love and devotion which an occasion like this must

originate. Yet, I ask you to reflect on the injunction of the text **ושמחתם לפני ה' אלהיכם שבעת ימים** "You shall rejoice before the Eternal your God seven days." When God's creative might called the system of nature into being, and organised this sphere for the dwelling-place of man—the seventh day was proclaimed a day of rest from labour; hallowed by God, that it might ever after be held most sacred unto man. Thus, closing the weekly cycle of time, it was to be the conclusion of work—the festival of peace and spiritual happiness. So is it with life—the period of toil and labour appointed to us on earth, which will only terminate with that seventh day of rest **כי הולך האדם אל בית עולמו** "When man goeth to his long home."

You, then, who are on the first day of life's long week—who have before you a weary pilgrimage, beset with trials and temptations, are admonished to-day, that the same pure hearts which should be your first fruit-offering on the occasion of your inauguration, must be carried through your entire life. You are solemnly admonished **מכל משמר נצור לבך כי ממנו תוצאות היים** "More than any other charge to guard your heart, because from it proceed the issues of life." On every occasion, and under all vicissitudes of fortune, only let your heart be well directed, and your feet will never stumble. If the blessing of God descend upon you in your future career, and you reap plentifully of the good which He showers down from Heaven to the deserving;—if honour and dignity be conferred upon you—and wealth accumulate within your storehouses, I charge you to remember the

psalmist's words: חיל כי ינוב אל תשתו לב "When riches increase, set not your heart upon them." And if, on the contrary, your path be one of gloom—by clouds overshadowed—by adverse winds made cold and cheerless, let your heart, with confidence, repose on God's beneficence and love. Look up to Him for help—trust to Him for enlargement ויאמץ לבבכם and He will strengthen your hearts. Against your neighbour, never let your heart be defiled by hatred, spite, or malice—by envy or jealousy; but let it abound with love and good-will for every fellow-creature. Let it be a tabernacle of peace, in which religion shall welcome all men, and meet them with a greeting of brotherly affection. Then shall you go through your week of life, in the spirit inculcated by Divine command; and when its end approaches, and the last day of convocation summons you to meet your God in judgment, bright angels will conduct you to His presence, that you may claim for your heritage אור זרוע לצדיק ולישרי לב שמחה "The light that is sown for the righteous, and the gladness for the upright of heart."

II.

The second portion of your festive sacrifice, is the לולב or "palm branch," compared by our sages to the vertebræ or back-bone of the human body. In its relation to your position, it will inculcate the duty of worship, which, beginning with your religious majority, must be carried out through your entire life, with all the pure and sacred emotions that distinguish this your first day. Remember, that while a devout and reverent worship is a most grateful

offering to the Eternal, nothing is so offensive to Him as mechanical service. When we use the festal palm during these solemn days, we are enjoined צריך לחבר האתרוג ללולב בשעת נענועו ולנענע בשניהם יחד "It is necessary to join the citron with the palm-branch, at the time of waving it, that both be used together." And this injunction typically represents, the necessity of enlisting our heart in every devotional exercise. Now, my young friends, every symbol employed in our religion, is a moral lesson taught by external objects; and we should fail in our observance of God's ordinance, if we neglected to carry into execution the spirit of the type. Let me, therefore, urge you all through life, to have a proper reverence for the house and for the service of God. Look upon public worship as possessing the threefold advantage of being a just and reasonable tribute to God—the most civilising and improving agent of society, and the most comforting and elevating resource for ourselves. Value it, therefore, as a privilege—a great and glorious privilege; and join with it the spiritual adjunct of a pure heart. Your lives will thus be spent in a manner honourable to yourselves, useful to your fellows, and glorious to the God of your creation. But השמרו לכם פן יפתה לבבכם וסרתם ועבדתם אלהים אחרים והשתחויתם להם "Take heed lest your hearts be deceived, and ye depart and worship other gods, and bow down to them." Take heed lest you fall prostrate before interest, gain, or pleasure, and pay them the devotion which you owe to God alone. The pursuit of all these with moderate zeal, will be always honourable to you. Indus-

try, on the one hand, and intellectual delight on the other, are courses prescribed by the laws of society and by the best impulses of your nature. Value them, therefore, and pursue them; but never magnify them into the all-engrossing care of your lives—never prosecute them to the neglect of your religion—never sacrifice to them your holiest emotions—your kindest sentiments—your dearest hopes, for then will they assume the character of idols, and your blind worship of them will call down the wrath of Heaven, in the curses which you have just heard pronounced as the consequences of an apostasy from the God of Heaven and earth.

III.

We next come to the bough of the tree Aboth, the myrtle sprig, which, in the Medrash, symbolises the eyes. Here, my brethren, we approach that part of the offering that is the most significant; for, although the heart is the great centre of human iniquity, the eyes, as the introducing agent of temptation, deserve an equal amount of watchfulness. Our sages have united them in this sense, when they aphoristically observe לבא ועינא סרסורי רחמא "the heart and the eyes are the commissioners of sin." Therefore, must you be careful of the direction your eyes take, so that they may have no perception for the allurements which will present themselves before you, in your progress through life. God calls to you through the solemnities of the day תנה בני לבך לי ועיניך דרכי תרצונה "Give Me thine heart, My son, and let thine eyes observe My ways." Thus, to let your hearts reverence the Eternal, to train yourselves to love and fear and serve Him, you have

but to cultivate a knowledge of His word—to meditate upon that sacred page on which is developed **מצות ה'** **ברה מאירת עינים** that commandment of God, which is pure and enlightens the eyes. Make it then, your constant study and delight, to take to heart the sublime teaching of Holy Writ. Fly to it for solace, in trouble and affliction; pour out your gratitude over its pages in joy and prosperity; regulate by its uniform and eternal rules, your conduct to God, to your neighbour, and to yourselves. Thus, when your eyes rest on your neighbour's possessions, and covetousness, entering your heart, prompts you to unrighteous desires, God's law will attract your gaze and suppress the unholy longing. Illumined by the heavenly light, your eyes will dwell only where your pure heart and frame bent in worship may direct; and when your seven days shall terminate and your earthly rejoicing over, you go to rest in the solemn assembly of saints, to spiritual majesty and celestial bliss shall those eyes re-open, as you share in the joys everlasting, reserved for the faithful children of the covenant.

IV.

Lastly, my young friends, we are to consider the **ערבי נחל** willows of the brook, which our sages assimilate to the lips. As the eyes are the agents of iniquity in all the derelictions of self-duty, so are the lips the implements of evil against our neighbour. Lying and deceit—calumny and detraction, all vices which degrade human nature, issue from the lips. Blasphemy and profanity have there their origin—flattery and self-adulation proceed thence too—**בפשע**

שפתים מוקש רע "it is by the transgression of the lips that the wicked is snared." How firmly, then, must the willow-twigs be bound to the palm-branch of Heaven directed worship! How closely must they be attached to the myrtle-sprigs of Heaven-directed eyes! How near must they be preserved to the unblemished, lovely, fragrant citron of a pure and holy heart, ere all evil be suppressed and only good go forth from the lips! Yet if they be kept together during the days of your lives, your rejoicing before the Lord will be perfect—your festal sacrifice will be a continual offering, whose sweet savor will ascend on high, and be acceptable in the sight of God. Then put the bridle of peace on your lips, to repress every unholy expression;—to keep back the false oath—the vain and profane swearing—the words of falsehood and duplicity. Let them, like the lips of the righteous, open only to dwell with love and devotion upon the praises of your Lord—to utter the words of peace and brotherly love, to pronounce the wholesome reproof or well-timed counsel that will aid and save a sinning neighbour. Then, my brethren, will you discharge the duties which you have professed to-day—the duties which are embodied in the sacred law of which you are guardians. Those duties have been introduced to you, under the types of our festal boughs and fruit; let them ever remain as verdant in your memory, and let them have the same freshness and fragrance to the perception of all men. In using them, let your first motive be the glorification of your God; but cherish also, as a holy and pious incentive for their employment, the love of your fellow-creatures. And while heart and frame,

lips and eyes, are all uniting thus in serving God and benefiting man, let your unceasing chorus ascend in melody to the skies, proclaiming לה' כי הודו "Give thanks to the Eternal, for He is good, His mercy is to eternity."

With these words of counsel, my brethren, I consign to you, תורה צוה לנו משה מרשה קהלת יעקב, "the law which Moses commanded us, the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." I charge you, never to forget the obligations which you have this day undertaken, but always to love that holy law for which your fathers have died,—to cherish it as your best treasure, and to defend it and its truth with your life's blood. לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפֶּיךָ והגית בו יומם ולילה למען תשמור לעשות ככל הכתוב בו כי אז תצליח את דרכך ואז תשכיל "This book of the law must never depart from thy mouth: thou must meditate on it by day and by night, so that thou observe and act according to all that is therein written, for only then can thy way be prosperous—only then canst thou be wise."

PRAYER.

THOU great God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! Look down with grace and favour upon us, assembled in Thy presence on this Thy holy feast-day. Look down upon these, the sons of Thine ancient chosen ones, who have come to claim their inheritance in Thy law of truth. Strengthen, O Lord, the resolves of these Thy youthful covenanters, who seek their portion in that exalted destiny, which Thou hast ap-

pointed to their race, and by the endowment of Thy holy spirit, give them Thy divine support to act as they have vowed before Thee. Help them, Father, that they become faithful servants of Thy will, obedient to Thy sacred statutes, observant of Thy high behests,—Jews in heart and spirit. Preserve them in virtue and integrity, that they may live to be the comfort of their parents' days,—the joy and honour of their friends. Let no temptation to the evil path, have influence over their acts, but make Thou their hearts too pure to heed allurements that lead away from Thee and Thy divine commandments. Instil into their souls that holy feeling which will encourage them to spurn the meretricious charms of life that stand opposed to godliness, and to cleave unto Thee through every earthly trial and reverse. And bless them, Father! bless them with that high, that choicest blessing, which Thou didst pronounce upon our great progenitor. Let Thy spirit rest upon them, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, and let the fear of Thee be their treasure. Amen.

GOD give you, my sons, of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, with abundance of corn and oil. God Almighty bless you, make you fruitful and multiply you. God give you the crowning blessing that, you may return to inherit the land wherefrom you are strangers. ADONAI bless you and preserve you. ADONAI let His countenance shine upon you and compassionate you. ADONAI lift up His countenance towards you and give you peace. Amen.

Pessimism & Judaism seen to lie
in different planes.

Rarely does the corollary of Jewish hope
run on minor scale.

Even when prophet or bard of old
remembers darkened outlook, it is
always with hope for best.

When disappointments & forebodings
crowd to his lips, he never fails
to accentuate hope that where
sombreer notes have rung their
measured, a brighter movement
will ring out a glorious message.

The festival tide, which we now
celebrated with dignified symbolism
is monument to the joyful
spirit, the very warp & woof
of Israel's conviction.
First comes ^{broken notes of the} the ^{hymns} home of
Israel's natal day.
Then the gloom of the 4th

my friends,

Today we enter upon a new year. We ~~are at~~ ^{have come to} that season of the year when festal participations are mingled with solemn reflections, & while the heart exults in the sweetness & happiness of the new year, the soul is roused to a sense of responsibility with a recognition of the cares & duties which that coming ^{period of time} ~~year~~ also brings to us.

To the pious Jew, as to the pious religionist of every faith, the doubtfulness and uncertainty of coming should not be approached in the spirit of the materialist or the Epicurean whose doctrine is "Let us eat, drink & be merry for tomorrow we may die," but to the pious Jew a season like this ~~calls for~~ ^{calls for}

with no uncertain ~~voice~~ ^{tones} to meditation
& prayer. Like the voice of the
muezzin upon the minarets
of the ~~Islamic~~ ^{Andalusian} mosque,
does a day like this, call
all honest, religious men to
~~prayer~~ & spiritual communion, ^{prayer}.

Upon a night like this, therefore,
it is eminently fitting that we
should devote a portion of our
time to a consideration of the
sphere & character of that most
powerful advocate, upon which
we must most rely & concerning
which we too often speak words of
deprecation.

For this evening then I have selected
~~a~~ text taken from the work of
a great preacher—

"Keep thy foot, said he, when thou
goest to the house of God & draw near
to hear rather than give the sacrifice
of fools for they know not that
they do evil." Eccl. 4:12

First of all let us ask ourselves
where is this H of G? Where the
habitation of His glory? Is there
any locality where we must look to
find Him especially? Is there any
house that human hands can
build where alone God may be said
to abide? Why then does Solomon
speak of a H of G?

Let us go into the open field, under
the wide arch of heaven, with all
His majestic works illuminating
the sphere, & gazing with myriad
eyes upon the lovely face of the
earth + there let us pray -
Can it be said that God is not
nigh, because 'tis not His house?
In the dark prison-cell, where
granite walls & massive bolts
imprison some felon's form,
whose heavy chains clank as
he falls upon his knees to pray
with tearful eyes & penitential heart
- shall we say that God is not there
- it is not His dwelling place